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THE

LITERARY WOMEN

OF

ENGLAND.

INCLUDING A BIOGRAPHICAL EPITOME OF ALL THE MOST EMINENT TO THE YEAR 1700; AND SKETCHES OF THE POETESSES TO THE YEAR 1850;

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM THEIR WORKS, AND CRITICAL REMARKS.

BY JANE WILLIAMS,

AUTHOR OF 'ARTEGALL,' 'A MEMOIR OF THE REV. THOMAS PRICE,' ETC.

"All these were honoured in their generations, and were the glory of their times."—ECCLESIASTICUS xliv. 7.

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	Born.	Died.
Juliana Prioress of Sopewell	flo. 1460	..
Margaret Countess of Richmond	1440	1509
Queen Anne Boleyn	1499	1536
The Daughters of Sir Thomas More :—		
1. Margaret Roper	1508	1544
2. Elizabeth Dancy	..	..
3. Cecilia Heron	..	..
His Niece, Margaret Gigs	1508	1570
Anne Askew	1520	1546
Queen Catherine Parr	..	1548
Frances Lady Abergavenny	..	..
Lady Jane Grey	1537	1554
Mary Countess of Arundel	..	1557
Queen Mary Tudor	1515	1558
Mary Roper	..	..
Mary Countess of Sussex and Arundel	..	..
The Ladies Anne, Margaret, and Jane Seymour	..	..
Lady Lumley	..	..
Queen Mary Stuart	1542	1587
The Daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke :—		
1. Mildred Lady Burleigh	1526	1589
2. Anne Lady Bacon	1528	1600
3. Elizabeth Lady Russell	1529	..
4. Catherine Lady Killigrew	1530	..
Anne Countess of Oxford	..	..
Margaret Ascham	..	..
Anne Wheathill	..	..
Frances Countess of Sussex	..	..
Queen Elizabeth Tudor	1533	1603
Elizabeth Grymston	..	..
Elizabeth Jane Leon	..	..
Lady Elizabeth Carew	..	..
Mary Countess of Pembroke	..	..
Lady Mary Wroth	..	..
Elizabeth Countess of Lincoln	..	..
Anne Countess of Arundel	..	..
Elizabeth Countess of Kent	..	1651
Elizabeth Countess of Bridgewater } (Sisters) { Lady Jane Cheyne	..	1663
	..	1669
Catherine Phillips	1631	1664
Lucy Hutchinson	1620	..
Margaret Duchess of Newcastle	..	1673
Anne Countess of Dorset, Pembroke, and Montgomery	1590	1675
Mary Countess of Warwick	..	1678
Lady Pakington	..	1679
Lady Fanshawe	1625	1680
Anne Killigrew	..	1685

	Born.	Died.
Anne Wharton	..	1685
Lucy Marchioness of Wharton	..	1716
Aphara Behn	..	1689
Elizabeth Walker	1623	1690
Lady Gethin	1676	1697
Lady Halket	1622	1699
Lady Chudleigh	1656	1710
Mary Monk	..	1715
Anne Countess of Winchelsea	...	1720
Susannah Centlivre	1680	1723
De la Rivière Manley	..	1724
Jane Brereton	1685	1740
Elizabeth Rowe	1674	1737
Catherine Cockburn	1679	1749
Frances Duchess of Somerset	..	1754
Elizabeth Tollet	..	1754
Miss Pennington	..	1759
Miss Farrer	..	..
Anne Viscountess Irwin	..	1760
Anne Countess Temple	..	1777
Anna Williams	..	1783
Lady O'Neil	1758	1794
Susannah Blamire	..	1794
Mary Robinson	..	1800
Caroline Symmons	..	1803
Elizabeth Carter	1717	1806
Charlotte Smith	1749	1806
Hannah Cowley	1743	1809
Anna Seward	1742	1809
Mary Tighe	1773	1810
Anne Hunter	1742	1821
Hester Lynch Thrale	1740	1821
Jane Taylor	1783	1822
Eleanor Anne Porden	1795	1825
Anna Lætitia Barbauld	1743	1825
Lady Anne Barnard	1750	1825
Helen Maria Williams	1762	1827
The Margravine of Anspach	1750	1828
Mrs. Greville	..	..
Hannah More	1744	1833
Mary Jane Jewsbury	1800	1833
Felicia Dorothea Hemans	1793	1835
Lætitia Elizabeth Landon	1802	1838
Anne Grant	1755	1838
Lady Flora Elizabeth Hastings	1806	1839
Mary Anne Browne	1812	1844

THE

LITERARY WOMEN OF ENGLAND.

INTRODUCTION.

"Look back who list unto the former ages,
And call to count what is of them become."

SPENSER'S '*Ruins of Time.*'

"If there be no region of literature, science, or art, where female genius has not distinctly asserted its supremacy, neither perhaps is there any, from poetry to mathematics, in which it has not already greatly distinguished itself. This it has done against all sorts of disadvantages and discouragements, in the face of opinion and prejudice, in despite of means and facilities on the whole very inferior to those which the other sex has enjoyed." — CRAIK'S '*Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties, Female Examples,*' pp. 13, 14.

IT is a common thing—it is, indeed, the very commonest of all things—that people should live and love those about them, should hope and fear, labour and strive, sicken and die. Yet out of these ever-recurring events, happening to all, come the vast, incalculable, and wonderful diversities of incident which set centuries, ages, cycles, lustres, years, and days in strange contrast with each other, and variously affect the same periods in different climes and countries. Among the innumerable lives ever arising, lapsing, and expiring, there is not, there never has been, there never

can be, one with which every other has not strong ties of natural sympathy. To know what others did, and felt, and thought, and how they died, concerns every living individual, and more especially to know the history of those whose lot in more than the general features of human likeness resembled their own. Few differences are more wonderful than those between the leaves of the same tree. Hence, the writings of women, apart from the specific purport of those writings, and besides the indications of feminine character which they often afford to the outer world, possess a peculiar charm for young minds of a similar cast; and, the ability to please naturally involving the power to modify and direct, it is evident that the welfare of society must be promoted by an extended knowledge of the lives, principles, and sentiments of the most eminent and excellent English authoresses.

Apart from the knowledge preserved by men, the sensible matrons of England are constantly accumulating family adages, household maxims, and practical apophthegms, for transmission and increase from generation to generation. No observant person can have failed to admire many instances of the wealth of unwritten wisdom thus brought to bear upon domestic conduct. Much more valuable results may therefore reasonably be expected from the records of our choicest women's lives and thoughts; and out of such calm depths may be dredged up precious things, unfaded and unmutilated by the shallow attrition of the world's waves and shingles in their rough tidal flow.

Men stand, as it were, upon a promontory, commanding extensive views, and open to immediate impulses from all above, below, and around them. Women sit like genii of secluded caves, receiving echoes, and communicating mere reverberations from the outer world, but not without

their own pure springs and rills, tinkling soft music and fraught with peculiar efficacy.

The natural and inherent differences between feminine intellects are likewise very great, and culture renders many of those differences distinct and conspicuous which might have lain undeveloped and unnoticed under ordinary circumstances; thorough cultivation having a directly opposite effect to that superficial form of education which veils or neutralizes the distinctive faculties.

Dr. Lindley enumerates ten principal forms in which the young leaves of plants are folded up—"The appressed, as in the misletoe; the conduplicate, as in the rose; the imbricate, as in the lilac; the equitant, as in the iris; the obvolute, as in the sage; the plaited, as in the vine; the involute, as in the violet; the revolute, as in the willow; the convolute, as in the apricot; and the circinate, as in the sun-dew." By far more numerous and more complicated, but equally true, each to its specific development, are the foldings in the buds of human character; and the study of such human vernation is one of the most general interest which can be offered to the attention of any reader. It constitutes the chief attraction of ably-constructed fiction, and the main charm of authentic records.

Biography, yet more emphatically than history, may be defined as "philosophy teaching by examples;" and besides those plain and striking lessons which it placards for all as human beings, and for many as Christians, it has in certain instances an instructive voice perceptible only to women and to authoresses, and tones still finer and more thrilling, subtly penetrating the hearts of individuals with applicable truths, which can effectually be learned only by means of self-drawn inferences.

Within the limits of my personal acquaintance, the want of such an epitome as the present aspires to be has often, in my hearing, been deplored; and it is my full conviction that this want is felt by a large section of the public.

This book owes its origin to a sort of accident. Having undertaken to write a Critical and Biographical Essay on the subject of Mrs. Hemans and her poetry, I was consequently led to institute a comparison between her compositions and those of other English poetesses. The want of *a compendious work exclusively appropriated to a summary view of our literary countrywomen* being thus forced upon my attention, I was induced to enlarge my plan, and, instead of illustrating only the character of one authoress, to take a brief survey of the general progress of female literature in England from the earliest period to the year 1700, where the stream divides into several branches, and thence to trace the course of female poetry, the principal of those branches, down to the year 1850.

As a portrait-painter produces his own idea of the persons who sit to him, so have I endeavoured to produce original likenesses of character, though often in the earlier chapters constrained perforce to piece them out as Professor Owen does the fragments of extinct species.

Deeming that sort of literary criticism which connects the written utterances of individuals with the every-day workings of their hearts to be essential to the establishment of those solid principles which must form alike the basis of correct taste and the active spring of all that is most valuable and excellent in mental acquirement, I have earnestly endeavoured throughout, candidly, kindly, and truthfully, to estimate the lives and works of my illustrious fellow-countrywomen.

I have happily been supplied with some fresh biographical materials of great value. I have never been content to derive information from a single source; and whenever I discovered that the works of good writers contained facts or hints from which inferences could be drawn relating to personal history or illustrative of character, I have gathered and garnered the fruits of my researches.

Pleasant as it is to rove through fields, woods and valleys, by the sides of lakes and rivers, on the sea-shore, and over hills and mountains, collecting indigenous flowers from their various homes, yet the exhilarating exercise fatigues when long continued, and perhaps there are few botanists who do not at last prefer resorting in quiet ease to the Regent's Park, or to Kew, where British gardens scientifically arranged exhibit within a small area the accumulated treasures of the country's Flora. A similar state of feeling prevails concerning books, and those readers who want leisure and inclination for the examination of several hundred scattered volumes may probably be glad, while evading studious toil, to see an abstract of the knowledge they desire placed before them in these pages.

It is refreshing to let the eyes wander sometimes over the ample pages of the old and only complete edition of the 'Biographia Britannica,' revelling in the profusion and even in the confusion of its knowledge, and more especially taking in all the works and ways of the British worthies, and gaining leisurely acquaintance by description with their very looks. But the women admitted into this goodly assemblage are few, and by no means well selected: for instance, under the letter "A," only Arabella Stuart, Arlotta (better known as Arlette), and poor Mrs. Ascham in dutiful attendance on her spouse, are to be

met with; while "B" produces only Joan and Margaret Beaufort, Aphara Behn, and Boadicea, with Lady Bacon unobtrusively waiting on her husband and sons. Nor does the scale or choice amend in following down the alphabet; the most important notices of female writers lurking in all sorts of improbable corners, carelessly treated, and often shut out from the index as well as from the lettering. It may be argued, that, in compensation of this obvious deficiency, the separate memoirs of English authoresses are numerous. Many of them, however, are not easily attainable, and a vast amount of time and labour must be expended in collecting and perusing them. It follows from this state of things, that, excepting the dates of their births and deaths, and the bare titles of their principal productions, furnished in books of reference, very little is known of them by the public, and Englishwomen generally are deprived of the benefit and satisfaction of forming a real acquaintance with their lives and characters.

The 'Censura Literaria' of Sir Egerton Brydges, the 'Collections' of Nicholls, and similar repositories of miscellaneous matter, are valuable as storehouses, but fatiguing as places of frequent resort. Students are thankful for them, fashionable ladies and indolent gentlewomen are not; while young persons, eager for congenial information and ready to shape their yet ductile natures after the noblest models, are easily repulsed by difficulties, and cast back again upon the callous shows of outer life in conventional usages.

The four volumes of Granger's 'Biographical History of England' contain brief notices of all the most famous and infamous men and women of Great Britain, from the days of King Egbert to the Revolution of 1688, with a list of their engraved portraits; but, excepting this list, there

is no information concerning our literate fellow-country-women which may not be obtained more satisfactorily from other sources.

The three volumes of the Rev. Mark Noble's 'Continuation' of Granger's History supply some interesting particulars of the few literary women who died between the years 1688 and 1727.

Warton's 'History of English Poetry' extends only to the early part of Queen Elizabeth's reign, but it does justice to the few female writers who flourished before that period in England.

'Chambers's Cyclopædia of English Literature,' the most complete series of extracts, with criticisms and brief biographical notices, in the language, includes authoresses as well as authors, but attempts no delineation of personal character.

Craik's 'Sketches of Learning and Literature in England' notice female writers in flocks and groups, without giving sufficient distinctness even to the intellectual character of individuals. In both the 'Cyclopædia' and the 'Sketches' the authoresses are doubtless reduced to their true relative proportions when contrasted with authors, but the peculiarly valuable and most attractive attributes of the female mind are obscured.

In Park's edition of Walpole's 'Catalogue of Royal and Noble British Authors' may be found, intermixed with brief records of learned and literary princes and lords, brief records also of learned and literary princesses and ladies, from the reign of King Henry VII. down to the close of the eighteenth century. This valuable compilation contains many specimens of the writings of our patrician authoresses. It has been carefully consulted in the preparation of the present work. It affords much

information concerning portraits, and gives many excellent engravings from them. We may affect to despise pictures, yet everybody must, on reflection, be conscious that, next to knowing any one by sight, an acquaintance with a portrait forms most advantageously in the mind a nucleus for the accumulation and retention of particulars concerning the original. There is always more in a look than any words can describe; it has a sort of photographic and permanent power on the mind.

Wilford's 'Memorials and Characters, together with the Lives of divers Eminent and Worthy Persons,' includes a large proportionate number of ladies and gentlewomen, but extends only from the year 1600 to the year 1741. This elaborate collection, published by subscription in the year 1741, relates solely to natives of the British Islands, and was intended to celebrate persons of "bright and exemplary" lives, without any special regard to literary attainments or productions. Seventy-eight female names are filed on this bead-roll of fame. Of these less than a dozen belong to literate or literary women, and none are allowed a place but members of the Church of England, with the solitary exception of Mrs. Rowe.

Ballard's 'Memoirs of Learned British Ladies,' 1 vol. 8vo., 1775, with a Preface dated "Magd. Coll., Oxon, Nov. 23, 1752," is the only work with which I am acquainted that is exclusively devoted to literary Englishwomen. It begins with Juliana, the anchoret of Norwich, who wrote prophecies in the reign of King Edward III.; and proceeding in chronological order, it ends with Constantia Grierson, who translated Tacitus and Terence, and died in the year 1733. Mr. Ballard's work is an industrious, accurate, and generally impartial compilation of biographical matter, derived from the most authentic

sources, which he quotes with scrupulous care. I am greatly indebted to it for valuable assistance in a part of my task.

Professor Craik's little volume of 'Female Examples,' in his 'Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties,' is an amusing and pleasant book for every reader, and to young women of literary tendencies it is more especially valuable, vindicating the general character of female writers while reproving the failings incidental to it, tracing out bright paths of usefulness, and inciting to excellence by the exhibition of attractive examples selected from among the learned women of various nations.

Having seen frequent references in the 'Censura Literaria,' and in other works, to 'The Feminead, or Female Genius,' written in the year 1751 by John Duncombe, M.A., I sought it out in Pearch's 'Collection of Poems,' vol. iv. pp. 186-201; supposing that I should find in it either a learned collocation of the world's most illustrious women, or at least of those born in Britain. In both these expectations I was disappointed; although I believe that the author did intend to immortalize all his literary countrywomen, and deceived himself with the mistake of having done so.

Under the two first kings of our Georgian period it appears to have been generally taken for granted that Queen Anne's reign witnessed the culmination of our planet's literary glory, and that previous to the Restoration of King Charles II. England had possessed no female writers. In conformity with this erroneous theory, Mr. Duncombe's encomiastic list begins with Orinda-Catherine Philips; includes the Countess of Winchelsea, Mrs. Catherine Cockburn, Mrs. Rowe, the Duchess of Somerset, the Viscountess Irwin, Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Madan, Mary Leapor,

Misses Farrer and Pennington, a Delia (probably Mrs. Chapone), who was the authoress of Odes to Peace, Health, and a Robin-Redbreast; and ends with a Eugenia, who is eulogized as excelling in drawing as well as in poetry. The allusion to a 'Search' or 'Inquiry' after happiness identifies this Eugenia with Elizabeth Carter. Mr. Duncombe mentions with censure, as foils to his heroines, Mrs. Manley, Mrs. Centlivre, Aphara Behn, and a trio named Philips, Pilkington, and Vane.

'The Feminead' does credit to its author as a gentleman, a scholar, and a moralist, though not as a poet. The versification consists of rhymed heroic couplets, the sentiments are blameless, and the advice which the poem conveys is good though commonplace. Conscious of feebleness, he invokes "every muse" in his exordium, and, feeling the combined aid of the Nine to be either insufficient or denied, exclaims in desperation,—

> "To these weak strains, oh thou, the sex's friend
> And constant patron, Richardson, attend!"

No doubt Mr. Richardson did attend to those "weak strains," and he probably assisted in spreading their fame. As a record of many remarkable women, written with correctness and facility, 'the Feminead' may possibly be remembered in literary circles when works of far higher ability are forgotten.

During the last century several miscellaneous collections of the lives of celebrated women have been published in England, apparently without any other principle of selection than that of historical and contemporary notoriety, and perplexing the ambitious aspirations of youthful readers, by setting before them the dark doings and daring ascents of the Catherines de' Medici and of Russia, and the

discordant careers of the daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke and of Queen Elizabeth. Many works appropriated to historic series of our queens and princesses, executed with a happy admixture of antiquarian research and popular fluency, have more recently enriched women's knowledge of woman. The 'Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies,' with the prefatory notices of the several dictators or writers in chronological order, have likewise served to mark more particularly the extent and pace of feminine progress both in penmanship and moral culture during the periods when mental education in England was the exclusive privilege of the upper classes.

I am unacquainted with the existence of any systematic work, either succinct or voluminous, running parallel with the course of English literature in the condensed or arranged lives and writings of literary Englishwomen from the Heptarchy to the year 1850. Nor do I know of one in which the poetesses of England have been compared among themselves.

While our country has thus been content, throughout long succeeding centuries, to leave the names of her most eminent daughters faintly discernible and often overshadowed on chance monuments, America has ostentatiously marshalled for the Elysian fields of fame the battalions of her 'Female Prose Writers,' under the banner of Mr. Hart; and her 'Female Poets,' under the banner of Mr. Read: although the greater number of those authoresses were still alive when enlisted, and not a hundredth part of the productions of the two-fold array can possibly substantiate a claim to lasting preservation.

Another ponderous American volume, edited by Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale, professes not only to include all our English heroines, but also to abridge all the published

memoirs of remarkable women of all lands and of all kinds, adding fresh transatlantic conscripts to this vast Amazonian host. The title of the book is 'Woman's Record; or, Sketches of all Distinguished Women from the Creation to A.D. 1854, in four Eras, with Selections from Female Writers of every Age.' This laborious compilation shows the infusion of the writer's original thought only in the tinge of a peculiar form of heterodoxy. It is bare, bald, and often inaccurate, but it is of real value as a catalogue of names and dates.

I may, with good old Fuller, "confess the subject is but dull in itself to tell the time and place of *men's* (*i.e.* women's) birth and death, their names, with the names and number of their books; and therefore this bare skeleton of time, place, and person must be fleshed with some pleasant passages." It consists with the primary purpose and very nature of the present work, that these "pleasant passages" should be extracted from the writings of the persons of whom the biographical notices are given. This more than re-clothes the skeleton; it restores the form, reanimates it with the breath of life, and gives to every voice its own peculiar tone of thought and feeling.

A uniform reprint of the best works of our English authoresses might probably be useful, not only in marking the educational progress of the people, and facilitating the critical comparison of those works with each other, but also in exhibiting a concentrated view of what has already been achieved. Such a series would offer strong incentives to fresh aspirants so to direct their labours as to fill up ascertained deficiencies, and so to mould their compositions as to fit the mutable requirements of social life. The selection need not amount to a sixty-fourth portion of the library belonging to Count Leopold Ferri, of Padua, which, con-

sisting only of books written by women, comprised thirty-two thousand volumes. This was a cosmopolitan assemblage. It would be well in our own day if every nation made its own, for near relationship and local associations enhance sympathetic interest, and united retrospection gives a powerful impulse to advancement.

Meanwhile, deeply conscious of omissions, which I have failed in procuring materials to supply; of shortcomings, which I do not possess the means of eking out; and of that liability to error which peculiarly attaches to a collocation of many facts, dates, and opinions, I can only declare my willingness to profit by any suggestions which may be offered for the rectification and improvement of the Synoptical Essay which I now lay before the public, trusting that an employment which has soothed and cheered many hours of solitary suffering, may not prove wholly useless.

JANE WILLIAMS, Ysgafell.

38, *Sydney Street, Chelsea.*
June 20, 1861.

CHAPTER I.

A.D. -1500.

The Ancient Britons — The Ancient Germans — The Anglo-Saxons, including the Abbess Hilda, the Abbess Eadburga, Queen Osburga. Ethelfleda, Lady of the Mercians, and Queen Editha — The Saxon Abbess Hroswitha of Gandersheim — The Anglo-Normans, including Queen Matilda and Queen Adeliza — Ceridwen, a Welsh myth — Mary of France — Translated works of Christina of Pisa — English and French languages — Lady Pelham — The Daughters of John of Gaunt — Lady Husee — The Pastons — Missive letters — Queen Elizabeth Woodville — Juliana, Prioress of Sopewell — Devorguilla Balliol — Queen Philippa — The Countess of Ulster — Mary St. Paul, Countess of Pembroke — Queen Margaret of Anjou.

"Your worthiness
Remains recorded in so many hearts,
As time nor malice cannot wrong your right
In the inheritance of fame you must possess;
You, that have built you by your great deserts
Out of small means a far more exquisite
And glorious dwelling for your honour'd name
Than all the gold that leaden minds can frame."—DANIEL.

WARTON has aptly remarked that the ancient Greeks proved their high appreciation of feminine intellect by representing the nine Muses as women, and that, perhaps, their loftiest conceptions of wisdom, purity, and virtue were embodied in the Athenian Minerva.

Among many ancient nations, women regularly officiated as priestesses: the oracles of Delphi and Dodona were uttered by women, and

"Often as the maids of Greece surround
Apollo's shrine with hymns of festive sound,
They name the virgins who arrived of yore
With British offerings on the Delian shore:

Loxo, from giant Corineus sprung;
Upis, on whose blest lips the future hung;
And Hacaërge, with the golden hair."*

From the 33rd, 34th, and 35th chapters of the 4th book of Herodotus,† it is clear that other British priestesses, Argis and Opis, Hyperoche and Laodice, had also at two different periods carried sacred offerings to Delos.

The devotional tendency of the feminine mind appears to have been acknowledged and honoured among all the civilized nations of antiquity. It cannot be doubted that the Druidical priestesses were poets, although their poetry has passed away from the earth, like most of their choral music, with the faith which it expressed. Religious sentiment cherished by traditionary precepts and by solitary contemplation, amid the sublime and beautiful scenery of their courts, their temples, and their groves, could not fail to evoke the poetic faculty wherever it existed. Hesiod‡ alludes to the poetry of the Celts, when mentioning in his 'Theogony' the

"Gorgons, dwelling on the brink of night,
Beyond the sounding main, where, silver-voiced,
The Hesperian maidens in their watches sing."

Diodorus Siculus§ testifies from Hecateus that the inhabitants of Britain "demean themselves as if they were Apollo's priests;" and repeats the tradition of Britain being Latona's birthplace. We are not expressly informed that Claudia Rufina was a poet, but we are told that she endeavoured to cultivate the taste of her fellow-countrymen, by making them acquainted with the verses

* Cowper's Translation of Milton's Epistle to Manso.
† Beloe's Translation.
‡ Elton's Translation, lines 330, &c.
§ Booth's Translation, book ii., chap. ii.

of a Roman author; and this fact may be considered to imply the existence in her of that strong poetic tendency which all history and experience attest to be an inseparable attribute of the Celtic mind. The great number of female names perpetuated in those of ancient churches and their respective parishes in Wales indicate the noble and wealthy women who first founded those churches to have been both zealous and literate Christians.*

Tacitus, describing the 'Manners of the Germans,' says, "There is, in their opinion, something sacred in the female sex, and even the power of foreseeing future events. Their advice is therefore always heard; they are frequently consulted, and their responses are deemed oracular. We have seen, in the reign of Vespasian, the famous Veleda revered as a divinity by her countrymen. Before her time Aurinia and others were held in equal veneration, but a veneration founded on sentiment and superstition, free from that servile adulation which pretends to people heaven with human deities." †

Among the Anglo-Saxons women were much honoured, and many of them were famous for literary acquirements.

The grandniece of Edwin King of Northumbria, Hilda the Abbess, was in many respects a very remarkable woman. She was one of the converts of St. Paulinus, and took the veil at the age of thirty-three. Having distinguished herself by her admirable management of the monastery of Hartlepool, she proceeded to build the monastery of Whitby, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, and to regulate its discipline upon the same plan. Bede relates that "Her prudence was so great, that not only in-

* See Rees's 'Welsh Saints.'

† Murphy's 'Tacitus,' Valpy's ed., vol. v., pp. 90-91.

different persons, but even kings and princes, as occasions offered, asked and received her advice. She obliged those who were under her to attend so much to reading of the Holy Scriptures, and to exercise themselves so much in works of justice, that many might there be found fit for ecclesiastical duties, and to serve at the altar." * The venerable monk proceeds to enumerate five bishops of singular merit trained at Whitby. Hilda was also the patroness of Cædmon, the greatest poet of the Anglo-Saxons, who, at her instance, set about transferring into verse the whole course of sacred history. After seven years' illness, borne with exemplary fortitude, she died in the year 680, at the age of sixty-six.

Mr. Wright, in his 'Biographia Britannica Literaria,' of the Anglo-Saxon period, and in the 3rd section of his Introduction, treating of "the Anglo-Latin writers," says, "The cultivation of letters was in that age by no means confined to the robuster sex; the Anglo-Saxon ladies applied themselves to study with equal zeal, and almost equal success. It was for their reading chiefly that Adhelm wrote his book 'De Laude Virginitatis.' The female correspondents of Boniface wrote in Latin with as much ease as the ladies of the present day write in French, and their letters often show much elegant and courtly feeling. They sometimes also sent him specimens of their skill in writing Latin verse. The Abbess Eadburga was one of Boniface's most constant friends; she seems to have frequently sent him books written by herself, or by her scholars, for the instruction of his German converts; and on one occasion he accompanies his letter to her with a present of a silver pen (unum graphium argentum).

* Bohn's edition of Giles's Translation of the 'Ecclesiastical History,' p. 213.

Leobgitha, one of her pupils, concludes a letter to Boniface by offering him a specimen of her acquirements in Latin metres. 'These underwritten verses,' she says, 'I have endeavoured to compose according to the rules derived from the poets, not in a spirit of presumption, but with the desire of exciting the powers of my slender talents, and the hope of thy assistance therein. This art I have learned from Eadburga, who is ever occupied in studying the Divine law.'" *

Boniface himself paid an indirect compliment to the caligraphy of Eadburga and her nuns, by requesting that abbess "to cause a copy of the Gospels to be written magnificently in letters of gold, and sent to him in Germany, that his converts there might be impressed with a proper reverence for the sacred writings."

This Eadburga, otherwise called by the less harmonious name of Bugga, was an Anglo-Saxon princess, who appears to have been long a resident at Rome. She was honoured by the particular friendship of Archbishop Boniface, her fellow-countryman, known in early life by the name of Winfred, and by subsequent generations as "the Apostle of the Germans." †

The 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,' ‡ under the date A.D. 694, records, that on the accession of Withred to the sovereignty of Kent he assembled a great council at Beckenham, for the express purpose of consulting upon the best means of promoting the interests of Christianity throughout his dominions; and that the council was attended not only by Berthwald Archbishop of Canterbury, and by Tobias

* See Wright's 'Biographia Britannica Literaria.'

† See Mosheim's 'Ecclesiastical History,' Maclaine's Translation, Tegg's edition, vol. i., pp. 313-14.

‡ Bohn's edition of Giles's Translation, pp. 331-2.

Bishop of Rochester, with the abbots, but also by the abbesses, who took an active part in the proceedings, and received an especial injunction from the king, by their good precepts and example to instruct and advise their sections of the community.

Osburga, the wife of King Ethelwulf, is described by the British Asser, Bishop of St. David's, Exeter, and Sherborne, as "a religious woman, noble both by birth and nature."* This Saxon queen, by means of an illuminated manuscript of native poetry, which she offered as a reward, stimulated the literary emulation of her sons, and aroused to earnest activity the mind of her youngest, afterwards the glorious King Alfred the Great. His eldest daughter, Ethelfleda, inherited her father's high qualities—moral, mental, and martial. She probably shared the same advantages of education as her brother Ethelwerd and her sister Ethelswitha, of whom Asser records that they learned to write, and could read books both in the Latin and Saxon languages; "for they have carefully learned the Psalms and Saxon books, especially the Saxon poems, and are continually in the habit of making use of books."† She married Ethelred Earl of Mercia, and, surviving him several years, governed and defended that territory with extraordinary discretion and skill. She was commonly called "The Lady of the Mercians:" to her, King Athelstan, her nephew, was indebted for his good political training, and she won from the chroniclers of her times the well-deserved praise of being "the wisest woman in England." This Saxon Zenobia died at Tamworth twelve days before Midsummer,

* 'Life of Alfred,' Bohn's edition of Giles's Translation, p. 44.
† Ibid., p. 68.

in the year 922, and was buried "within the east porch of St. Peter's Church at Gloucester." *

Queen Editha, the daughter of Earl Godwin, and the wife of King Edward the Confessor, was a woman of cultivated mind, and well acquainted with books. Ingulphus, or the pseudo-historian of Croyland, relates, that in his boyhood, when visiting his father, who held an employment about the court, he often met her Majesty as he came from school, and that she questioned him concerning his studies and verses, "and, willingly passing from grammar to logic," would catch him in the subtleties of argument; not omitting afterwards to make her handmaiden count out for him a pecuniary reward, and sending him to the buttery to refresh himself." † Whatever may be thought of the genuineness of the 'History of Croyland,' it can scarcely be doubted that the facts related of the queen accorded with her known character and acquirements.

Amidst the general "stagnation of the poetical faculties" in Europe during the dark ages which preceded the twelfth century, Mr. Hallam mentions "Anglo-Saxon poetry of a wild spirit, rather impressive, though often turgid and always rude;" and, in a note, quoting Tiraboschi's allusion to Latin versifiers in Italy, he adds,—"Hroswitha, Abbess of Gandersheim, has perhaps the greatest reputation among these Latin poets. She wrote, in the tenth century, sacred comedies in imitation of Terence, which I have not seen, and other poetry which I saw many years since, and thought very indifferent." ‡

On the same subject Richard Price says,—"Perhaps the plays of Hroswitha, a nun of Gandersheim, in Lower

* See Giles's 'Anglo-Saxon Chron.'
† 'Pict. Hist. Eng.,' part i., p. 187.
‡ 'Lit. Eur.,' vol. i., p. 10, ed. iv.

Saxony, who lived towards the close of the tenth century, afford the earliest specimens of dramatic composition since the decline of the Roman empire. They were professedly written for the benefit of those Christians who, abjuring all other heathen writers, were irresistibly attracted by the graces of Terence, to the imminent danger of their spiritual welfare, and the certain pollution of their moral feelings."* Her works were first printed at Nuremberg, by Conrad Celtes, in the year 1501.

William of Malmesbury informs us that Queen Matilda, daughter of Malcolm III., King of Scotland, niece of Edgar Atheling, and first wife of King Henry I. of England, "had given her attention to literature, being educated from her infancy among the nuns at Wilton and Romsey."† He mentions also her lavish generosity to "clerks of melodious voice," and to trouveurs. Queen Matilda died in the year 1107; and in 1121 King Henry married Adeliza, daughter of Godfrey Duke of Louvaine; who emulated her predecessor in the liberal patronage she afforded to the trouveurs.

In Mrs. Everett Green's collection of the 'Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies of Great Britain, from the commencement of the Twelfth Century to the close of the Reign of Queen Mary,'‡ the earliest are two from Queen Matilda to Anselm Archbishop of Canterbury; their probable date being about A.D. 1103. There are also epistles from Adela Countess of Blois, youngest daughter of King William the Conqueror; from the Empress Matilda; from Mary Countess of Boulogne, the daughter of King Stephen; and from many of the wives and daughters of the Plan-

* Note to section vi. of Warton's 'Hist. Eng. Poetry.'

† Giles's Translation, Bohn's ed., p. 452.

‡ 3 vols., Colburn, 1846.

tagenets; but the originals are all in the Latin language, and written by professional scribes; although in several instances the feelings and characters of the women at whose command or desire they were penned shine clearly through the borrowed words. One passionate effusion, addressed by Queen Eleanor, the widow of Henry II., to Pope Celestine, on the subject of her son Richard Cœur de Lion's captivity, is evidently dictated by herself, and merely Latinized by her secretary; for even in the English translation the emotions of the woman and the mother predominate.

Mr. Hallam declares that "Before the end of the eleventh century, and especially after the ninth, it was rare to find laymen in France who could read and write;" and that "The case was probably not better anywhere else, except in Italy." *

It would appear that in the tenth century the case must have been much better in Wales, for Howel Dda, the sovereign prince, was assisted in the preparation of his code of laws by the chiefs of tribes, and by other laymen of noble rank, besides a hundred and forty of the clergy. Those laws bear witness to the high estimation in which literature, and the bards, its lay professors, were then held.†

The hero of a Welsh poem, long erroneously attributed to Taliesin, says,—

"I have been gifted with genius
From the cauldron of Ceridwen."‡

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* 'Lit. Eur.,' vol. i., p. 51, ed. iv.

† See 'The Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price,' vol. i., pp. 115-232, 'On the Comparative Merits of the Remains of Ancient Literature,' especially pp. 154-5; see also the Translation of 'The Laws of Howel Dda,' by Aneurin Owen, and published by the Record Office; and see likewise Powel's 'History of Cambria.'

‡ See the Appendix to Giles's Translation of Nennius's 'History of the Britons,' p. 42. James Bohn's 8vo. edition.

In the Welsh language, one word, *cawr*, expresses a great person, whether it be a giant in bodily size, according to the primary sense, or a hero, or a genius. This Ceridwen was a giantess, an eminent woman, and an enchantress of what has been termed the Neo-druidic period, A.D. 600-1200, when the old national mythology, which had vanished away long centuries before in the light of Christianity from the popular belief, was again evoked as a poetical theory by the bards: just as the theogony of Greece and Rome continued in more recent times to mystify the literature of modern Europe. Ceridwen was a type of inventive fertility; she was a Ceres, a Luna, and a Minerva in one. Her cauldron she medicated with herbs so efficacacious, that three drops of the contents, touching the lips of a bard, imparted the prophetic power of beholding all futurity.* Hence it may be inferred that the British bards of the period thought not less highly of the intellect of women than the ancient Greeks did; although the apparent compliment might perchance in both nations have consisted merely in the idea of maternal production.

The earliest female writer mentioned by Warton is Mary of France, who, in the thirteenth century, transfused and versified the old traditionary tales of Armorica into those Lays of the Romance language, of which the MS. still exists among the earliest specimens of Romantic fiction. She was born on the Continent, but wrote in England, and died about the year 1268. Her Poesies, including her Lays, Fables, &c., were published by M. de Roquefort in 1820. Translations of the Lays may be found in Ellis's 'Early English Metrical Romances.'

Early in the fifteenth century Christina of Pisa flour-

* See the Iolo MSS.

ished. She translated several works from the Latin into the French language. Her 'Moral Proverbs' were translated into English by Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, who lost his head with Vaughan and Grey at Pomfret Castle; they were printed by Caxton in 1477. Caxton likewise printed a translation of her 'Book of Feats of Arms and of Chivalry.' Warton quotes from those proverbs one quaint couplet:—

> "Little valueth good example to see,
> For him that will not the contrary flee."

The discouragement of the Anglo-Saxon literature under King Edward the Confessor, and the Norman and Anglo-Norman sovereigns, suppressed the literary spirit of the country, and produced an era of ignorance. From the reign of Edward the Confessor until the reign of the Plantagenet Edward III., French was the language of the English court and of the upper classes of English society. The most exact and most elliptical of historians states that "English was seldom written, and hardly employed in prose, till after the middle of the fourteenth century."*

He mentions "an English letter from the lady of Sir John Pelham to her husband in 1399, which is probably one of the earliest instances of female penmanship;" satirically adding, "By the badness of the grammar, we may presume it to be her own.† In a note he gives a copy of it from Collins (who derived it from the archives of the Newcastle family), describing it as "the oldest private letter in the English language," and remarking that others of an earlier date will probably be found; "at least it cannot now be doubtful that some were written, since a lady is not likely to set the example." This acute inference is

* 'Lit. Eur.,' vol. i., p. 49, ed. iv. † Ibid., p. 54.

doubtless correct, and, so far from being a censure, may rather be deemed a commendation, for the characteristic of feminine talent has ever been rather to refine and to improve upon inventions than to originate them.

In another passage Mr. Hallam alludes to this letter as "ungrammatical and unintelligible." Allowing the truth of the first charge, it may be contended that the second rests not upon the diction, but upon our ignorance of the state of the people in the counties of "Sussex, Surrey, and a great parcel of Kent," at the period when Lady Pelham wrote to Sir John from his castle of Pevensey.

The daughters of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, were the first Englishwomen who knew how to write; and Johanna of Navarre, his daughter-in-law, widow of John, sixth Duke of Bretagne, and second wife of King Henry IV. of England, is the first English queen whose autograph signature is known to be extant:* A.D. 1415. Her "Jehane" shows the process by which the name of Johanna was softened down into "Jane."†

A letter from Constance Lady Husee to King Henry VI., A.D. 1441, is introduced by Mrs. Everett Green as "the earliest specimen which had fallen under her notice of an English epistle written by a lady." ‡

According to Sir Henry Ellis, the correspondence of literate persons in England, previous to the reign of King Henry V., was usually carried on either in the Latin or French language. This fact might also be reasonably inferred from the predominance of the priests, and their

* 'Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies of Great Britain, from the commencement of the Twelfth Century to the close of the Reign of Queen Mary,' edited by Mary Anne Everett Wood. 3 vols. 8vo.

† Ibid. See the facsimiles prefixed to the first vol.

‡ Ibid., vol. i., p. 92.

Latin ministrations; and from the French habits and tendencies of the court and aristocracy.

There is no better test of mental culture, either in an individual or an age, than familiar letters afford. Of the four hundred and forty-three Paston Letters, in Knight's edition, belonging to the historical period 1440-84, nearly one-third are written by women or addressed to women. Several, upon urgent affairs, are directed either for "The Right Worshipful John Paston," or, in his absence, for "The Right Worshipful Mistress Paston," his wife. Then, as ever, sagacious minds and strong wills gained domestic ascendency, and Dame Agnes and Mistress Margaret influenced their husbands, controlled their children, governed their servants, retainers, and tenants; and, whenever occasion required, acted as able deputies or principals in the management of landed and personal property, and in the transaction of all sorts of business. Their letters, and the letters of many other ladies and gentlewomen of the party, are not inferior in style, sense, or spirit to those of the greater number of their male correspondents.

The letter addressed to Sir John Paston by Elizabeth Duchess of Suffolk, sister of King Edward IV., written about the year 1461, is noticed by Mrs. Everett Green as "the earliest holograph of any royal lady of England of which we have any record." *

A note subjoined to this statement says that "In the Tower collection are several English letters written towards the close of the reign of Henry VI., but they are of no particular interest, and are from females of inferior station."

This information is important, as a proof that education at that period was not the exclusive privilege of women of

* 'Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies,' vol. i. p. 94.

high rank; but it may be safely asserted, until further evidence is produced, that no English females under the degree of gentlewomen, unless they were nuns, could at that period read and write.

In all ages and countries, there have been, are, and can be, only two sorts of epistolary missives—the formal and the spontaneous. Cultivation alters them, and their combinations produce innumerable varieties, but in these the original species can always be distinctly traced. The formal is known by its clinging, supporting, and shaping itself upon some rule, frame-work, or type. The earliest compositions of children, those of persons educated chiefly by the ear, those of crafty persons, and those of scholars whose learning oppresses their mental energy, are always more or less stiffly artificial and formal.

The letters of those persons who write as freely as they think and speak may properly be termed natural and spontaneous, whatever tincture they may show of their author's education or ignorance. Each several letter of the Paston collection exhibits a crude, unblended junction of artificially-formal beginnings and endings, with intervening passages of spontaneously-natural utterance: set phrases being constantly used, nevertheless, for the communication of certain kinds of information, such as tidings of mortal sickness or death.

Family interests, family acquisitions, worldly advancement, and personal convenience; the cares of lands and houses, goods and chattels, profits and losses, are the engrossing topics of all; with such narrations of the political troubles of the time as interfered with the private welfare of the writers. The wearing out of villenage, and the little injury inflicted upon the country by the civil war, may be inferred from this correspondence.

Treating of the period 1440 to 1500, Mr. Hallam says of the Paston Letters:—"They are all written in the reigns of Henry VI. and Edward IV., except a few as late as Henry VII., by different members of a wealthy and respectable, but not noble, English family; and are, therefore, pictures of the life of the English gentry in that age. We are merely concerned with their evidence as to the state of literature. And this, upon the whole, is more favourable than, from the want of authorship in those reigns, we should be led to anticipate. It is plain that several members of the family, male and female, wrote, not only grammatically, but with a fluency and facility, an epistolary expertness, which implies the habitual use of the pen." *

Only two autographs of Queen Elizabeth Woodville are known to be extant. One is the signature of a letter,† and the other is attached to a letter-patent. The former reproves Sir William Stonor for hunting and slaying her deer in the forest and chace of Barnwood and Excell; the latter relates to her tenants, Henry and Alice Grey, probably kinsfolk of her first husband, who had been impleaded in the King's Court.

Juliana Prioress of Sopewell.

Juliana, daughter of Sir James Berners, of Berners Roding, in the county of Essex, and sister to Richard Lord Berners, was, in the year 1460, and for many years afterwards, Prioress of Sopewell Nunnery. She is said to have been a learned and accomplished woman, and appears in the fore-front of our English authoresses on the

* 'Lit. Eur.,' vol. i., p. 165, ed. iv.

† 'Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies,' vol. i., p. 110.

strength of her claim to the compilation and translation of certain treatises upon hawking, hunting, fishing, and armoury. They were first printed in 1468, at the neighbouring monastery of St. Albans, and again in 1496 by Wynkyn de Worde. The treatise on hunting is in rhyme, which makes no approach to poetry. The coarseness of her details does discredit alike to her character as a gentlewoman and as a nun.

Although the sports of the field were generally prohibited to the religious orders, yet, on various pretexts, special exemptions were granted, and wealthy monks and nuns went out as well equipped to hunt and hawk as any of their lay compeers. It may, therefore, be concluded that Juliana, the Prioress of Sopewell, was practically well acquainted with the subjects on which she wrote.

Previous to the year 1500 several women of illustrious rank, although not personally known as scholars or authoresses, proved their true appreciation of the advantages of learning by founding colleges and halls at the Universities.

During the reigns of King Henry III. and King Edward I., and between the years 1263 and 1284, Balliol College, Oxford, was founded by John Balliol, of Bernard Castle, and by Devorguilla his wife, the grand-parents of John Balliol, afterwards King of Scotland. Granger mentions a mezzotinto engraving from a portrait in the Oxford Gallery which bears her name, but really represents Jenny Reeks, an apothecary's daughter.

In the year 1340 Queen's College, Oxford, was founded by Robert Eglesfield, chaplain and confessor to Queen Philippa, consort of King Edward III., and avowedly with her Majesty's "favour and assistance." Granger mentions a whole-length mezzotinto engraving of her,

taken from a painting at Queen's College, Oxford, the face being derived from an ancient stone head of this queen over the back gate of the college.

In the same year Clare Hall, Cambridge, was founded by Richard Badew, who, not being rich enough to fulfil his intention, was munificently aided by Elizabeth de Clare, Countess of Ulster, the third sister and co-heir of Gilbert Earl of Clare. Granger mentions a mezzotinto engraving of this countess, "E. Tabula in Aulâ Clarensi."

In 1347 Mary St. Paul, Countess of Pembroke, founded Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. She was that bride of melancholy notoriety whose gallant bridegroom, Audemar de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, was accidentally slain in a tilting-match upon the wedding-day. Immediately and for ever sequestrating herself from the world, the widowed Countess devoted her subsequent life to prayer and to acts of piety and charity. Granger mentions a mezzotinto engraving of her, without alluding to any original portrait.

Queen's College, Cambridge, was founded in 1446 by Queen Margaret of Anjou, the consort of King Henry VI., and re-founded in 1465 by Queen Elizabeth Woodville, the consort of King Edward IV., thus blending the rival roses. Granger mentions a portrait of Queen Margaret in the refectory of the College, and two engravings of her, besides a figure in Montfaucon's 'Monumens de la Monarchie Françoise,' but doubts the genuineness of all. He mentions only one engraving of Queen Elizabeth Woodville.

CHAPTER II.

A.D. 1500-1550.

Margaret Countess of Richmond — Remarks on the period — Queen Anne Boleyn — The daughters of Sir Thomas More — Margaret Gigs — Anne Askew — Queen Catherine Parr — Frances Lady Abergavenny.

"The tender lark will find a time to fly,
And fearful hare to run a quiet race;
He that high growth on cedars did bestow,
Gave also lowly mushrooms leave to grow."

ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

MARGARET COUNTESS OF RICHMOND.

MARGARET BEAUFORT was esteemed in many particulars the model woman of her time. She was born in the year 1440, at Bletshoe, in Bedfordshire—the only child and heiress of John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, and of his wife Margaret Beauchamp, daughter of Lord Beauchamp, of Powick. By her first husband, Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond, she became the mother of her only child, afterwards King Henry VII. Her second husband was Sir Henry Stafford, and her third Thomas Lord Stanley, subsequently created Earl of Derby.

She naturally possessed great mental sagacity; she made herself thoroughly acquainted with the English and French languages, and slightly with the Latin. She translated from the French the fourth book of Gerson's 'Treatise on the Imitation of our Saviour,' and from a French translation the 'Speculum aureum Peccatorum.'

She also, by her royal "son's command and authority," says Horace Walpole, "made the orders, yet extant, for great estates of ladies and noblewomen, for their precedence, attires, and wearing of barbes at funerals over the chin and under the same." Many devotional books were avowedly printed at her desire, and probably at her expense.

The only two letters of hers known to be extant are printed among those of 'Royal and Illustrious Ladies' in the first volume of Mrs. Everett Green's collection. It is remarkable that, although she never attained to regal dignity, she signed her name "Margaret R."—an indication of pretentious vanity. The first of those letters is a mere order, and goes straight and briefly to its purpose; the second is addressed to King Henry VII., and indicates an ambitious and crafty mind—the caressing tone of the mother being artfully blended with the submissiveness of the "servant and beadwoman." Until age brought death into obvious proximity, she was a busy woman of the world, and then she put on the dress and habits of a religious recluse. Like many other royal personages, she excelled in ornamental needlework; and it is said that King James I., in his progresses, constantly visited Bletshoe, and called for a sight of the specimens of her art which were preserved there.*

The "venerable Margaret" eulogised by Gray † founded the Divinity Lectureships of Oxford and of Cambridge, and re-founded the Colleges called Christ's (1505) and St. John's (1511) in the last-mentioned University. She also founded a free-school at Wymbourn, in Dorsetshire.

* Wilford, p. 552.

† "Leaning from her golden cloud,
The venerable Margaret see."—*Ode for Music.*

Having survived her son, King Henry VII., for three months, Margaret Countess of Richmond died June 29, 1509, aged 69. Her funeral sermon, preached by Bishop Fisher, is admirable for characteristic details.

She was buried in King Henry VII.'s Chapel, where her tomb and effigy may yet be seen. The inscription is said to have been written by Erasmus.

Granger mentions a portrait of her at Hatfield House, and gives an account of three engravings. There is one in Park's edition of Horace Walpole's 'Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors,' representing her as a gaunt and aged nun.

The revival of classical learning and the progress of the religious reformation have set their impress strongly upon the sixteenth century. In Margaret Beaufort, the great-granddaughter of John of Gaunt, an example has been given of the most highly cultivated Englishwoman of her time, 1440-1509. The printing-presses of Caxton and of Wynkyn de Worde had now multiplied the number of books by an increase of copies, by the introduction of new translations, and by the production of original works. The progress of learning on the Continent became a favourite topic of English conversation; and knowledge, which had appeared extraordinary in the youthful days of Margaret Beaufort, was expected as a thing of course in the youthful days of her granddaughters.

The eldest daughter of King Henry VII., Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scotland, occasionally employed a clerk, although the greater number of her crafty epistles, full of manifold discontents and never-ending solicitations, are written by her own hand. The beautiful and benevolent Mary Tudor, Queen of France, seems always to have written her own. Elizabeth Countess of Kildare, Margaret Countess of Salisbury, Anne Lady Rede, Anne

Countess of Oxford, and Elizabeth Duchess of Norfolk, wrote readily in English, A.D. 1500-25; and, after that period, female letter-writers in the upper classes of society multiplied abundantly.

People who have acquired a little valuable knowledge have usually acquired also both the means and the desire to augment it. The ability to read and write, and the power of transfusing thoughts, though shallow ones, into a second language, prepared those among the women of England who enjoyed such privileges to appreciate mental cultivation; it excited their sympathy in the intellectual activity of men of genius, and their ambition to emulate the attainments of the women of Italy. The consequence was that tutors, who a few years before would have been content to praise the progress of their female pupils in colloquial and epistolary French and English, delighted at discovering in them a thirst for deeper knowledge, gratified it with all the eagerness with which learners teach. "Greek is said to have been first publicly taught in this country, in St. Paul's school, by the famous William Lily, who had studied the language at Rhodes, and who was appointed the first master of the new school in 1512."* The works of Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, which laborious scholars were then enjoying in their collegiate cells for the first time, soon gained an introduction to England's palaces and mansions, and shared with Latin authors the favour of studious ladies. Thus classic literature became the fashion in the reign of King Henry VIII., and held its place of honour until the extinction of his dynasty.

In the biographical sketches which follow, brief as they are, care has been taken to give the locality of birth, resi-

* Craik's 'Lit. and Learning,' vol. ii., p. 202.

dence, and death, whenever it could be ascertained, because such associations between eminent persons and places tend not only to enhance the historic character of a country, but also to stimulate the natural interest of individual readers for scenes severally familiar to their eyes. Where lightning has once struck, it is apt to strike again; where certain rare, indigenous plants have once sprung up, others of the same kind may be looked for; and where the traditional memory of excellence is preserved, its voice may call forth emulative forms. Every eminent name becomes a trophy of success or a pillar of warning; and more strikingly such upon the very ground once trodden by its owner, where the scene, the rivers, the sky, the air, seem all whispering incentives to be good and to be great, to be good and to be great for immortality. There are persons whom localities affect only by means of associations, and to them such memorials are means of increasing happiness, while they add an unspeakable charm to the enjoyment of those who delight in scenery merely for its own sake.

Queen Anne Boleyn.

Horace Walpole, in his 'Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England, Scotland, and Ireland,' places Queen Anne Boleyn first in date among the women. She was one of the two daughters of Sir Thomas Boleyn, afterwards Earl of Wiltshire, and of the Lady Elizabeth Howard, his first wife. Her father held a place in the royal household; her mother was a reigning beauty, and figured advantageously in all the Court masques and pageants of her day. Anne Boleyn was born in or about the year 1499, at her father's seat, Blickling Hall, in Norfolk, where she was carefully brought up with her brother

George and her sister Mary until the death of her mother, which occurred in 1512.* Sir Thomas soon afterwards married again, and removed with all his family to Hever Castle, in Kent, where Anne's education was superintended by a French governess named Simonette. She acquired early excellence in music, dancing, and needlework, spoke and wrote her native language and that of France with graceful facility, and gave indications of unusual aptness for the arts of attraction and for every courtly accomplishment.

The society of their neighbour and contemporary, the highly-gifted Sir Thomas Wyatt, probably fostered in her and in her brother that taste for lyric poetry by which they were subsequently distinguished. In the month of September, and the year 1514, she accompanied her father to London, having been appointed one of the four Maids-of-Honour to the Princess Mary of England on Her Royal Highness's marriage with King Louis XII. of France. In this capacity she attended the ceremonial in the church of the Grey Friars at Greenwich when the Duke de Longueville acted as proxy for his Sovereign; and she was afterwards present at the celebration of the royal nuptials at Abbeville.

Anne Boleyn was tall in stature, slim in form, lithe and agile in movement; her complexion was dark, and her eyes brilliant. Her temper, though social and kindly, was haughty and impulsive, and not without that tendency to simulation and dissimulation which so strangely, yet so frequently, belongs to persons of undisciplined feelings. Her mental apprehension was quick, her spirits were gay and volatile, and she practised that indefinable attractiveness of behaviour which is felt to be fascination. Lord

* This fact rests on the authority of 'The Howard Papers.'

Herbert describes her as possessing "all the graces which belong to rest or motion."

Her prudent father went with her to France, and left her there, under the charge of a trusty kinsman. She was doubtless dismissed from her attendance on Queen Mary, together with the other English ladies of the bridal train, on the day after the nuptials, and she does not appear to have returned with them to England. Her musical skill, her sweet singing to her lute, her inventive talents in dress and in all sorts of ingenious pastimes, and her vivacious conversation, won high and general admiration at the French Court. She ran a brilliant course of coquetry, but, nevertheless, took good care both of her heart and her reputation.

After the death of King Louis, and the return of his young widow to England as the Duke of Suffolk's bride, Anne Boleyn reappears as a member of the household of Queen Claude, the amiable and prudent wife of the chivalric Francis I. Influenced apparently by political motives, Sir Thomas Boleyn fetched his daughter Anne back to England in the year 1522, and she was immediately appointed a Maid-of-Honour to Queen Catherine of Arragon. Her attachment and engagement to Lord Percy, her indignation against the King for breaking their contract, her jealous love and sorrow at Lord Percy's subsequent marriage with Lady Mary Talbot, rendered the next few years a period of acute and passionate suffering. She appears to have withdrawn from Court to her paternal home, and thence to France, where she spent four years in attendance upon the French Princess Margaret Duchess of Alençon, afterwards Queen of Navarre. Returning a second time to England, and re-entering Queen Catherine's service, ambition took the place of blighted

affection. Her versatile mind readily assumed the prevalent colour of the day, and she professed Protestantism, accepted the addresses of King Henry, was privately married to him in 1532, was crowned as his wife and Queen in 1533, and on the 7th of September in the same year became the mother of Queen Elizabeth. In acts of political circumvention, in the pride of state, the levity of amusement, the vanity of personal admiration, and the exercise of ingenious talents, she whiled away her brief period of splendid prosperity. The inconstancy and jealousy of her royal husband hurled her, as with a whirlwind, from a palace to a prison. She was beheaded within the precincts of the Tower of London, on an unsustained charge of unfaithfulness, May 19, 1536.

The following stanzas, which Ritson conjectured to have been written by her brother, George Boleyn Lord Rochford, are without hesitation attributed by Miss Strickland to Anne Boleyn, and she supposes them to have been made after sentence of condemnation had been passed upon her.

The letters of Anne Boleyn, as English compositions, are of remarkable merit, and the remonstrance to the King is one of the most eloquent epistles in the language; but there does not appear to be any other reason for assigning the dirge to her pen than the manifest appropriateness of its subject, and the fact that it is a poem of that period. Probably Sir Thomas Wyatt, who deeply sympathized in her grief and mourned her fate, was the real author. Internal evidence strengthens this conjecture; for, however innocent of falsely-imputed crimes, no poor creature, in apprehension of immediate death, would mention her own spirit as absolutely "guiltless;" but a sympathizing friend, in bewailing her fate, might very naturally

be led, by an excess of tender compassion, so to describe it:—

"Oh, death! rock me on sleep,
Bring on my quiet rest,
Let pass my very guiltless ghost,
Out of my careful breast.
Ring out the doleful knell,
Let its sound my death tell,
For I must die,
There is no remedy,
For now I die!

My pains who can express?
Alas! they are so strong;
My dolour will not suffer strength
My life for to prolong.

Alone, in prison strange,
I wail my destiny,
Woe worth the cruel hap that I
Should taste this misery!

Farewell my pleasures past,
Welcome my present pain!
I feel my torments so increase
That life cannot remain:
Sound now the passing bell,
Rung is my doleful knell,
For its sound my death doth tell:
Death doth draw nigh,
Sound the knell dolefully,
For now I die!"

Campbell has justly characterized this composition as "one of the most beautiful and plaintive strains of our elder poetry."

Anne Boleyn's portrait was repeatedly painted by Holbein and others, and many engravings from those paintings are enumerated by Granger.

The Daughters of Sir Thomas More.

Sir Thomas More was twice married: first, to Joanna Colt, the daughter of an Essex gentleman; and secondly, to Alice Middleton, a widow, whose maiden name was Grisacre. His son and three daughters were born of the first marriage, the second was childless. The home of Sir Thomas and his happy family was at Chelsea, and is shown by Faulkner,* on the authority of Dr. King the antiquary, who held the rectory of that parish for many years, to have been a large and commodious mansion opposite to the river, and built by Sir Thomas More on the site subsequently occupied by Beaufort House. There Erasmus passed many happy days, and there Holbein painted some of his finest pictures.

* See his 'History of Chelsea,' vol. i.

The daughters of Sir Thomas More were esteemed the most learned and accomplished women of their time. Erasmus called their home a temple of the Muses: it was also a temple of domestic affection and of true piety. Margaret, the eldest, was born about the year 1508. She gave early indications of extraordinary abilities, earnest devotion to God, and the most amiable and affectionate disposition. She married William Roper, Esq., of West Hall, near Eltham, Kent; and found in him a husband worthy of her love. She wrote many Latin epistles and English letters, and an original treatise on 'The Four Last Things,' and she translated the 'Ecclesiastical History' of Eusebius from the Greek into the Latin language. Her father rented a small separate house, into which he received poor and aged persons, whom he maintained at his own expense. To Margaret he intrusted the daily oversight of this house, and made her responsible for the poor inmates being well taken care of. She had likewise the gratification of seeing and partaking in the distribution of the large charities bestowed by her generous husband, who delighted in imitating the example of his father in-law. She was the pride and darling of both their hearts, and was held in the highest estimation for her virtue and genius by the most eminent persons of her time. The part which she bore in her father's happy household, and in his days of affliction, can never be forgotten by those who have read the 'Life of Sir Thomas More.' Her duteous care is said by Wood, in his 'Athen. Oxon.,' to have interred his mutilated corpse beneath the tomb which he had prepared within the southern wall of the chancel of Chelsea church. She rescued his venerated head from being thrown into the Thames after its exposure for fourteen days upon a pole on London Bridge, preserved it in a leaden box, and directed that it should finally be placed

with her in the grave. She died in the year 1544, leaving five children, and was buried in the vault of the Roper family, in St. Dunstan's church, Canterbury. It was her lowest praise to be "excellently well skilled in the Greek and Latin languages." She is described by one of Sir Thomas More's biographers as "most like unto her father both in favour and wit;" and as "a most rare woman for learning, sanctity, and secresy."

Her husband, who survived her thirty-three years, continued a widower until his dying day, honouring her memory by a life devoted, like her own, to learning, beneficence, and piety.

Burke, in a note to his pedigree of the Teynham family, mentions "a tradition preserved in the Roper family that Queen Elizabeth offered a ducal coronet to Margaret Roper," which she refused, as "a compromise for what she considered the judicial murder of her father."

Horace Walpole has alluded to the circumstance in a way that shows he believed it: but Margaret Roper died in 1544, and Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1558; the thing was therefore impossible. If the offer ever was made to her, it must have been by King Henry VIII., who died in 1547. It is by no means improbable that he might, in a fit of remorse, plan such a means of fancied compensation; and doubtless Margaret Roper would have refused it with horror, as the price of her father's blood.

Elizabeth, Sir Thomas More's second daughter, married the son and heir of Sir John Dancy.

Cecilia, the third daughter, married Giles Heron, Esq., of Shakelwell, Middlesex.

Both were remarkably learned, accomplished, and amiable women.

Worthy of similar commendation was Margaret Gigs, born in 1508, and brought up in the family of her illustrious kinsman Sir Thomas More. About the year 1531 she married her tutor, Dr. John Clement: she died at Mechlin, in Brabant, July 6, 1570.

The portraits of these four eminent women, with those of Sir Thomas More, Alicia his second wife, and several other members of the family, are preserved in the celebrated picture by Holbein. A very scarce engraving from it is mentioned by Granger as belonging to a book entitled 'Tabellæ Selectæ Catherinæ Patinæ,' 1691, fol.; and a copy of this engraving by Vertue in Knight's 'Life of Erasmus.'

Anne Askew.

Anne, daughter of Sir William Askew, of Kelsey, Lincolnshire, was born about the year 1520. She received a learned education, and was unwillingly married, at an early age, to the son of a wealthy gentleman named Kyme, the match having been arranged by the fathers without any regard to the inclinations of the parties. Her conduct as a wife was exemplary, and she solaced herself by studying the Holy Scriptures. Being gradually led by reflection and prayer to perceive the errors of the Romish Church, she was cruelly treated by her bigoted husband. She had passively sacrificed her earthly happiness to a sense of filial duty, but she steadfastly refused compliance with her husband's prohibition of Protestantism, and persevered in reading the Bible and in worshipping God according to her conscience. He consequently used her with great cruelty, and forcibly turned her out of doors. She sought refuge in London, where she was kindly treated by many

ladies of high rank who professed the Protestant faith. In the synopsis of Bishop Bale's 'Examination and Elucidation' (Censura Literaria, vol. vi. p. 1), she is described as "a gentlewoman, very young, dainty, and tender." Endeavouring to obtain a divorce from her husband, he revenged himself by instigating certain priests to procure her arrest.

It must be borne in mind that the Protestantism of King Henry VIII. consisted chiefly in the personal assumption of ecclesiastical supremacy and in the abrogation of papal privileges throughout his dominions. It was not the religious tenets of the monks, but their bold and obstinate adhesion to the papal authority, which provoked the King to the general dissolution of the monasteries; and throughout his arbitrary reign many of the genuine doctrines of the Reformation were publicly repudiated as heresy. In 1539, at the royal suggestion, an Act was passed attaching the penalty of death by burning or hanging to the denial of transubstantiation, to the assertion of the necessity of communion in both kinds, of the unlawfulness of celibacy, of the uselessness of private masses, and of auricular confession as necessary to salvation. Under this "Bloody Statute" Anne Askew was arrested and imprisoned.

Being placed upon the rack, in order to make her betray the names of persons holding similar opinions, she underwent the utmost extremity of torture with silent fortitude. Refusing to recant, she was, with three other sufferers, burned at the stake in Smithfield, July 16th, 1546. Her claims to authorship rest upon her letters and declarations of faith, which give proofs of extraordinary vigour and acuteness of mind, and upon some verses, which possess peculiar interest as the oldest metrical com-

position extant which is undoubtedly known to be from the pen of an Englishwoman.

THE BALLAD WHICH ANNE ASKEW MADE AND SUNG WHEN SHE WAS IN NEWGATE.

"Like as the armèd knight
Appointed to the field,
With this world will I fight,
And faith shall be my shield.

Faith is that weapon strong
Which will not fail at need;
My foes therefore among
Therewith will I proceed.

As it is had in strength
And force of Christ his way,
It will prevail at length,
Though all the devils say nay.

Faith, of the fathers old
Obtainèd right witness,
Which make me very bold
To fear no world's distress.

I now rejoice in heart,
And hope bid me do so,
For Christ will take my part,
And ease me of my woe.

Thou sayest, Lord, whoso knock
To them wilt thou attend,
Undo, therefore, the lock,
And thy strong power send.

More enemies now I have
Than hairs upon my head,
Let them me not deprave,
But fight Thou in my stead.

On thee my care I cast,
For all their cruel spite,
I set not by their hast,
For Thou art my delight.

I am not she that list
My anchor to let fall,
For every drisling mist,
My ship substantial.

Not oft use I to write
In prose nor yet in rhyme,
Yet will I show one sight
That I saw in my time.

I saw a royal throne,
Where Justice should have sit,
But in her stead was one
Of moody cruel wit.

Absorb'd was righteousness,
As of the raging flood;
Satan, in his excess,
Suck'd up the guiltless blood.

Then thought I, Jesus, Lord,
When Thou shalt judge us all,
Hard is it to record
On these men what will fall.

Yet, Lord, I Thee desire
For that they do to me
Let them not taste the hire
Of their iniquity!"

QUEEN CATHERINE PARR.

Catherine Parr was the eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Parr, of Kendal, in Westmoreland. The dates of her birth and of her first marriage are obscure. Being the widow of the Hon. Edward Burgh and of John Neville Lord Latimer, about thirty-two years of age, and bearing a high character for amiability and prudence, she became the sixth wife of King Henry VIII. on the 12th of July, 1543.

Among the lands included in her royal dower was the manor of Chelsea; and after the King's decease, which occurred on the 28th of January, 1547, she took up her abode at the new manor-house which he had built there, on a site a little to the eastward of the ground on which some years afterwards stood Winchester Palace. In the course of a few weeks after King Henry's death Queen Catherine married Thomas Lord Seymour, the Lord High Admiral. She died on the 5th of September, 1548, at her fourth husband's castle of Sudely, in Gloucestershire.

It is remarkable that the woman who had successfully accommodated herself to the various tempers of three previous husbands, and had made a patient and placid wife to one of the most morose and cruel tryants in the world, should have been undisguisedly miserable in her last union with an ambitious, intriguing, and fascinating nobleman.

Probably the inconsistency may be explained by the supposition that with King Henry her indignation at ill-treatment was suppressed merely by fear; while love for Lord Seymour exposed her heart to the poignant griefs of despised affection.

Historians are seldom content with assigning one sufficient cause for the premature death of any eminent person, and they have needlessly added poison to the child-bed fever which really killed Queen Catherine Parr.

She was a good Latin scholar, and wrote various letters and devotional works. Her 'Lamentation of a Sinner bewailing the Ignorance of her Blind Life' was published in 1548, soon after her death. In it she acknowledges her early reliance on external performances, the observance of fasts, pilgrimages, &c.; and states that she first became acquainted with the internal and real power of

religion by means of reading the Bible and praying for the Holy Spirit to make known its meaning to her soul. She also explains her sense of justification by faith and its indissoluble connection with personal holiness. Her 'Prayers and Meditations' are still often reprinted and largely circulated by the Religious Tract Society. Mediocrity of talent and sincere piety are characteristics of all her productions.

Portraits of her by Holbein and Vander Werff, and several engravings from them, are extant. She has the most intellectual countenance of either of King Henry's six Queens.

Frances Lady Abergavenny.

Frances Manners, according to Burke's pedigree of the Abergavenny family, was the daughter of Thomas, first Earl of Rutland; and according to Burke's pedigree of the Rutland family, the daughter of Sir Thomas Manners, third son of that earl: the latter being apparently the true paternity. She married Henry Neville, fourth Lord Abergavenny, who died February 10, 1587. Some of her prayers and verses were printed in the years 1577 and 1582. Among the latter is a curious hymn, cited by Mr. Park, in which the first letters of the lines being read downwards form the words "Frances Abergavenny." The sentiment is devout, and the versification not inferior to that of many other pieces of the time, but this acrostic is utterly devoid of literary merit.

CHAPTER III.

A.D. 1550-1600.

Remarks on the period — The Lady Jane Grey — Mary Countess of Arundel — Queen Mary Tudor — Mary Roper — Mary Countess of Sussex and Arundel — The Ladies Anne, Margaret, and Jane Seymour — Lady Lumley — Queen Mary Stuart — The four daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke — Anne Countess of Oxford — Margaret Ascham — Anne Wheathill — Frances Countess of Sussex.

"Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd
But to fine issues."

SHAKSPEARE'S *Measure for Measure*, act i., scene 1.

WARTON, in a note to the 58th section of his 'History of English Poetry,' brings various authorities to prove that in the latter part of the sixteenth century female writers of poetry had become numerous, and among them he quotes Puttenham, who, in his 'Art of Poesy,' says, "Dark word or doubtful speech are not so narrowly to be looked upon in a large poem, nor specially in the pretty poesies and devices of ladies and gentlewoman-makers, whom we would not have too precise poets, lest, with their shrewd wits, when they were married they might become a little too fantastical wives."

The diffusion of the Bible in the language of the people had familiarized educated Englishwomen with the triumphant odes of Deborah and Miriam, and with the eucha-

ristic hymns of Hannah, Elizabeth, and the Virgin Mary. The perusal of the Greek and Latin classics had probably informed them of the existence of Corinna, and made them acquainted with the lyrics of Sappho and the fame of Sulpitia. Travellers had related to them the names and works of the female poets of Italy. But the inspired matrons and maidens of Israel, the syrens of Greece, and the poetesses of the South, failed to awaken the true poetic spirit in the literary women of England. Among the highly cultivated Englishwomen of this period were several of undoubted genius; but there is a youth of literature as well as of human life, and it is as invariably conventional, or rash, in its productions, which are always deficient either in freshness or comprehensiveness. Young writers, and writers in an early stage of national literature, never know how to exert their powers to the best effect. Conscious of inexperience and of inexpertness, they in general timidly adhere to accepted propositions, and almost fear even to vary the forms of their original announcement. Sometimes, impelled by real emotion, the enkindling spirit irradiating the page gives bright indications of mental power. But repeated efforts are required in order to rise steadily above the interrupting damps of doubt, and to avoid disturbing contact with the straitened mazes of custom, so that native feeling and original thought may be brought to bear upon other minds with the accurate and assured result of an electric telegraph.

At the period under review some highly gifted Englishmen had already attained the literary use of the vernacular tongue, and that wondrous power of giving to words the vitality and light of genius which Englishwomen slowly acquired in the course of many subsequent generations; for only in the trivialities of practical life, and in the in-

stinctive promptings of feeling, are they more prescient than their masters.

The royal and noble female scholars of the present period were distinguished in general by that passive faculty of reception which is usually termed capacity: many of them also possessed active ability of a superior kind; and some of them were endowed with faculties of the very highest order. In this fresh spring-time of divine and human knowledge, educated minds, however, were braced up firmly and zealously, intent to run the race of life with the vigour of athletæ, whether for the fading wreaths of earth or the everlasting crowns of immortality. Among them some were excellent, and few inert, either in faculties or will.

The Lady Jane Grey.

There is not a more touching episode in the history of any country than the life of Lady Jane Grey. She was born in the year 1537; her parents were Henry Grey, Marquis of Dorset, afterwards Duke of Suffolk, and the Lady Frances Brandon; on whose children the succession to the English throne, next after the personal descendants of King Henry VIII., was entailed by the will of that monarch, expressly authorised by Act of Parliament.

The education of Lady Jane Grey was principally conducted by John Aylmer, afterwards Bishop of London, and never had any man a more apt or docile pupil: her disposition was mild and unassuming, her apprehension quick, her memory tenacious, and her judgment comprehensive, clear, and strong. A letter written by Lady Jane, and a fac-simile of her handwriting, when only eleven years old, are given in the third volume of Mrs. Everett Green's 'Letters.' Her early days were spent chiefly under her

parents' roof at Bradgate, and partly with the pious Queen Catherine Parr at Chelsea, where, worshipping in the church which was once attended by Sir Thomas More and his happy family, her noble heart might probably have been stirred up to emulate the gentle heroism of the admirable Margaret Roper. Jane Grey's attachment to the Protestant faith, derived from Bishop Aylmer, cherished by Queen Catherine, and deeply rooted by her own thoughtful choice, no subsequent trials or temptations could either loosen or destroy.

On the visit of Mary, the Queen Dowager of Scotland, to Greenwich, where King Edward VI. held his court, Lady Jane made her first public appearance in the train of her mother, then Duchess of Suffolk. She afterwards became the guest of the Princess Mary, who is said from that time to have entertained a prejudice against her, in consequence of her undisguised perception of the errors of Romanism.

Lady Jane Grey's pretensions to the Crown, though properly remote, rendered her, almost from infancy, an object of political intrigue, and, in May, 1553, she was given in marriage to Lord Guilford Dudley, fourth son of the Duke of Northumberland, a youth of her own age. On the 6th of July following, King Edward died, and Lady Jane was immediately made acquainted with the plan which had been prepared for her accession. Comprehending fully all the advantages and all the dangers attendant upon this measure, she deliberately and solemnly refused her assent; but, overborne by the solicitations of her husband, and by the authority of his parents and her own, she ultimately yielded up herself the conscious victim of their ambition. Sir Harris Nicolas * suggests that a

* 'Life of Lady Jane Grey.'

sense of the perilous position in which her nearest kinsmen had placed themselves to effect her advancement probably wrought upon her feelings to avert, or at least to delay, Mary Tudor's vengeance. However, it is certain that, instead of aspiring to the Crown, "she was," in the words of her father-in-law, the Duke of Northumberland, "by enticement and force made to accept it." Her own touching narrative of the circumstances, translated from the 'Istoria Ecclesiastica della Rivoluzion d' Inghilterra' of Pollini, is given by Mrs. Everett Green, in the 'Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies,' vol. iii., pp. 272-9.

On the 10th of July, 1553, Queen Jane was proclaimed; on the 19th she found herself divested of all the attributes of royalty—a solitary prisoner in the Tower. Her father was arrested, but liberated in a few days, having obviously been the dupe of the Dudleys. On the 22nd of August, the Duke of Northumberland, Sir John Gates, and Sir Thomas Palmer were beheaded for high treason.

On the 3rd of October, Mary Tudor was crowned Queen of England, and on the 13th of November her lovely rival, with Lord Guilford Dudley and two of his brothers, were put upon their trial for high treason. They all pleaded guilty, and received sentence of death; but, the rigour of their treatment being subsequently mitigated, hopes were entertained that their youthful lives would ultimately be spared.

On the 12th of January, 1554, a treaty of marriage was signed between Queen Mary and King Philip of Spain, and caused general discontent throughout the English nation, and more especially among the Protestants. Disturbances consequently took place in several counties. Sir Thomas Wyatt the younger and other men of in-

fluence conspiring to raise the people, induced the Duke of Suffolk to aid the insurrection, and, on its prompt suppression, he and the other leaders were consigned to prison. This imprudence accelerated the fate of Lady Jane, and sealed her father's doom.

The morning of the 12th of February, 1554, having been appointed for the execution of Lord Guilford and his wife, he sent to her a message of urgent affection, requesting a last interview, which their custodian had not refused. Lady Jane denied herself this melancholy indulgence, judging that the agitation of such a parting would tend to shake their firmness, and, in reply, suggesting the consoling thought that their separation would be but for a moment, and followed by a union exempt from change and sorrow. Passing under her window, he looked up, and she gave him a last encouraging signal. A few minutes afterwards, being herself led forth to the Tower Green, she met the car which contained his bloody remains. Grafton remarks that "so miserable a sight was to her a double sorrow and grief;" and another witness quaintly adds, "the spectacle a little startled her, and many tears were seen to descend and fall upon her cheeks." Lord Guilford suffered with dignity; having first knelt in prayer, and then asked for the prayers of the spectators, he calmly laid his head upon the block. Lady Jane approached the scaffold with perfect self-composure, mounted it with grave alacrity, addressed the assembled people with gentle eloquence; admitting "her crime against the Queen," but declaring her innocence of "either wishing or procuring the royal dignity." She called upon them to bear witness "that she died a true Christian woman, and that she expected salvation only through the

mercy of God in the merits of the blood of His Son Jesus Christ. She confessed that when she did know the word of God she neglected it and loved herself, and therefore the punishment had happily and worthily happened to her for her sins; she thanked God for His goodness, for giving her time to repent, and concluded her speech by requesting them to assist her with their prayers." She then knelt down, and devoutly repeated aloud the 51st Psalm, arose and prepared her person for the stroke, covered her eyes with a bandage, knelt again, felt for the block, and, quietly laying her head upon it, said, "Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit!" The place where her remains and those of her husband were interred is unknown.

On the 23rd of the same month the Duke of Suffolk suffered decapitation.

The literary remains of Lady Jane consist of a few Latin epistles, some letters in English to her near relations and friends, and a few lines of Latin verse. There is also extant a memorandum entitled 'Notes of a Conference Dialogue-wise,' made and signed by herself, four days before her death, for Feckenham, the priest, who had vainly endeavoured by argument to prevail upon her to renounce the Protestant faith.

The verses were scratched upon her prison-wall :—

1.

"Non aliena putes homini quæ obtingere possunt,
Sors hodierna mihi, cras erit illa tibi."

This distich has been variously translated, but never more suitably than as follows :—

"Think not, oh mortal vainly gay,
That thou from human woes art free,
The bitter cup I drink to-day
To-morrow may be drunk by thee."

Lady Jane probably derived the thought from the Son of Sirach's "Yesterday for thee, and to-day for me."

2.

"Deo juvante nil nocet livor malus,
Et non juvante, nil juvat labor gravis:
Post tenebras, spero lucem."

These have been well rendered by—

"Harmless all malice, if our God be nigh;
Fruitless all pains, if he his help deny;
Patient I pass these gloomy hours away,
And wait the morning of eternal day."

A good specimen of her English prose, though altered to the third person, is preserved by Heylin; it occurs in her reply to the first offer of the Crown:—"That the laws of the kingdom and natural right standing for the king's sister, she would beware of burdening her weak conscience with a yoke which did not belong to it; that she understood the infamy of those who had permitted the violation of right to gain a sceptre; that it were to mock God and deride justice to scruple at the stealing of a shilling and not at the usurpation of a Crown," &c.

Here also may be discerned the rectitude of her principles and the soundness of her understanding.

The uses of adversity she referred to in her dying speech, and they appear to have done, in the seven months of her imprisonment, the work of seventy years. In her devout heart the placid "Our Father" of childhood had soon changed into the "God be merciful to me, a sinner" of youth, and that into the "favour of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit" of pious maturity—sure precursors of immortal hallelujahs.

A very lovely engraving of her is prefixed to the last edition of Sir Harris Nicolas's 'Memoir,' another may be

found in Horace Walpole's 'Catalogue,' and Granger mentions two—one in the 'Heroologia,' and one in Larrey's 'History,' from a portrait by Vander Werff.

Mary Countess of Arundel.

Mary, daughter and co-heir of Henry Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, and first wife of Thomas Howard, fourth Duke of Norfolk, is set in Walpole's 'Catalogue' as the compiler of 'Certain Ingenious Sentences,' and author of a Latin dedication of them to her father. She died in 1557.

Queen Mary Tudor.

Mary, daughter of King Henry VIII., and of Catherine of Arragon, was born February 8, 1515. The sorrows of her injured mother appear to have given a melancholy cast to a disposition naturally reserved, and to have tinctured with bigotry a mind tenacious of early impressions, incapable of independent action, and biassed by few but strongly concentrated affections. She was educated by a succession of learned tutors, and Erasmus has commended the style of her Latin epistles. Her English translation of the Paraphrase of the Gospel according to St. John is praised by Udall, in his preface to "the first volume of the Paraphrase upon the New Testament," London, 1548, folio, in which it was included. Addressing the Queen Dowager, Catherine Parr, in this preface, Udall refers to "the great number of noblewomen at that time in England, not only given to the study of human sciences and strange tongues, but also so thoroughly expert in Holy Scriptures, that they were able to compare with the best writers, as well in inditing and penning of godly and fruitful treatises to the instruction and edifying of realms in

the knowledge of God, as also in translating good books out of Latin or Greek into English, for the use and commodity of such as are rude and ignorant of the said tongues." *

Mary was crowned Queen of England, November 30, 1553. Soon afterwards, the book before alluded to, and all others tending to promote the Reformation, were called in by royal proclamation. On the 25th July, 1554, she was married to King Philip of Spain, and on the 17th November, 1558, she died.

Tutors must be dull indeed when they allow that their royal pupils are dunces: but Queen Mary does not seem to have been deficient in that ordinary measure of capacity which suffices for the reception of carefully instilled knowledge. Many of her letters in Latin, Spanish, French, and English, are extant.

Queen Mary augmented Trinity College, Cambridge, which, in 1546, her father, King Henry VIII. had founded. She also built the Public Schools at Oxford. No less than ten engravings of this Queen, taken from various portraits, are described by Granger.

Mary Roper.

Mary, the youngest daughter of Margaret Roper, received a learned education, and in virtues, talents, and acquirements, proved herself worthy of her illustrious parentage. She was one of the gentlewomen of Queen Mary Tudor's privy chamber. She was twice married; first, to Mr. Stephen Clarke, and secondly, to Mr. James Basset. Roger Ascham mentions her as "an eminent ornament of her sex, and of Queen Mary's court." She translated from the Latin into English part of Sir Thomas More's 'Expo-

* Ballard.

sition of the Passion of our Saviour,' and Mrs. Roper's version of the 'Church History of Eusebius.'

Mary Countess of Sussex and Arundel.

Mary, daughter of Sir Thomas Arundel, of Llanherne, Cornwall, and of his second wife Catherine, daughter of Sir Thomas Granville, of Stowe, Knight, was twice married: first, to Robert Ratcliffe, Earl of Sussex, who died in 1566, and, secondly, to Henry Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel. She translated from English into Latin, 'The Wise Sayings and Eminent Deeds of the Emperor Severus;' from Greek into Latin, 'Select Sentences of the Seven Wise Grecian Philosophers;' and made a 'Collection of Similes from Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, and other Philosophers.' These works were dedicated to her father, and remain in manuscript, having been merely exercises made under a tutor.

The Ladies Anne, Margaret, and Jane Seymour.

The Ladies Anne, Margaret, and Jane Seymour, daughters of Edward Duke of Somerset, are mentioned by Park, on the authority of Ballard and Brindley, as authors of a 'Century of Latin Distichs upon the Death of Queen Margaret of Navarre,' which obtained sufficient celebrity to be translated soon afterwards into Greek, Italian, and French, under the title of 'Le Tombeau de Marguerite de Valois, Royne de Navarre,' and were printed at Paris in 1551. A letter to King Edward VI., translated from the original Latin of Lady Margaret and Lady Jane, appears at page 199 of the third volume of 'Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies.'

Jane Lady Lumley.

Jane, or Joanna, daughter and co-heir of Henry Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, and first wife of John Lord Lumley, trans-

lated from Greek into Latin several 'Orations' of Isocrates, and from Greek into English the 'Iphigenia' of Euripides. The prefixed argument to her version of this tragedy is given by Park, and its style is good, clear, and vigorous. The children of Lord and Lady Lumley having died young, the celebrated Lumley Library, after its worthy collectors had also passed away, was sold to King James I. Lady Lumley died, March 9, 1577. Her husband long survived her, and took a second wife.

Queen Mary Stuart.

Mary, Queen of Scots, the only surviving child of King James V. of Scotland, and of his wife the Princess Mary of Lorraine, was born on the 8th of December, 1542. Her charms, her accomplishments, and her misfortunes have furnished unfailing themes of historical discussion ever since the fatal 8th of February, 1587, when she expired at Fotheringay, under the axe of the executioner. Her musical skill, her elegant dancing, her graceful horsemanship, her cleverness in needlework, and her talents for languages and literature are renowned. Her letters are voluminous, her remaining verses few, and chiefly in the French language. Park gives two of these relics, but intimates a doubt whether the first can be accepted as genuine:—

1.

"Qui suis-je, helas? et de quoi sert la vie?
J'en suis fors qu'un corps privé de cœur;
Un ombre vayn, un objet de malheur,
Qui n'a plus rien que de mourir en vie.
Plus ne me portez O énnmis d'envie,
Qui n'a plus l'esprit à la grandeur;
J'ai consommé d'excessive douleur,
Votre vie en bref de voir assouvie;
Et vous amis qui m'avez tenu chère
Souvenez-vous que sans cœur et sans santé,
Je ne sçaurois aucun bon œuvre faire."

The second is in Latin:—

"O Domine Deus! speravi in te:
O care mî Jesu! nunc libera me.
In durâ catenâ, in miserâ pœnâ, desidero te;
Languendo, gemendo, et genu flectendo,
Adoro, imploro, ut liberes me!"

Mr. Seward, from whose 'Anecdotes' the verses were derived, gives the following specimen of the Queen's conversation:—"When one of the Cecil family was speaking of the wisdom of his sovereign Queen Elizabeth, Mary stopped him short by saying, 'Seigneur Chevalier, ne me parlez jamais de la sagesse d'une femme; je connais bien mon sexe; la plus sage de nous toutes n'est qu'un peu moins sotte que les autres.'" This, in English of the nineteenth century, would signify—Never talk to me, Sir Knight, of the wisdom of a woman; I know my sex right well, and the very wisest of us all is but a little less silly than the rest.

Of her it is related, that when walking in a procession at Paris, a woman pressed through the crowd to touch her, and excused the intrusive rudeness by declaring that she merely wished to satisfy herself whether beauty so angelic could belong to flesh and blood. Granger, who gives this anecdote, describes thirty-two engravings, from portraits by Janet, Zucchero, Oliver, Vander Werff, and other artists. The remarkable resemblance of some of her portraits to those of her father affords a test of their being genuine.

The Daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke.

Sir Anthony Cooke, of Giddy Hall, Essex, and his wife Anne, daughter of Sir William Fitzwilliam, of Milton, were the parents of four of the most remarkable women that England ever produced. Their daughters were all gifted with a sound understanding and fine natural

abilities: they all enjoyed the advantages of a learned education, and they all distinguished themselves in after-life by the useful exercise of their several talents.

Mildred, the eldest, was born in 1526. Under the instruction of Mr. Lawrence, the eminent Greek scholar, she became celebrated for her knowledge of ecclesiastical lore, and read the works of Basil, Cyril, Chrysostom, and the other Fathers in their original language. She made a translation into English of a passage from St. Chrysostom; and when she presented a large Hebrew Bible to the library of the University of Cambridge, accompanied it with a Greek epistle from herself. At twenty years of age, she married Sir William Cecil, afterwards the great Lord Burleigh and Lord High Treasurer of England. Lady Burleigh died April 4, 1589, and was sumptuously buried in Westminster Abbey. Her unostentatious acts of charity were, after her decease, first discovered by her husband, who recorded them to soothe his sorrow for her loss.

Anne, the second daughter, was born about the year 1528. She married Sir Nicolas Bacon, the Lord Keeper, and was the mother of two sons—Anthony Bacon, a man of remarkable talents and acquirements; and Francis Viscount St. Albans, the great Lord Bacon. Posterity is her debtor for having early cultivated the mind of this illustrious philosopher. Her own generation was greatly benefited in many ways by Lady Bacon. She was governess to the pious and intelligent young King Edward VI. She translated twenty-five sermons by Bernadine Ochine, from the Italian into English; and to her belongs the enviable distinction of being the very first woman who wrote in English for publication, and with a direct intention to supply a popular requirement. Bishop Jewell's 'Apology,' composed in Latin, had acquired great fame among the

learned, but was inaccessible to others; and many of the people who could read the Scriptures in the vernacular tongue, and took an eager interest in religious controversy, expressed their desire to become acquainted with that treatise, which they knew had won great celebrity among the champions of the Protestant faith.

Lady Bacon translated the 'Apology' into English, and sent a copy of her translation to the author, accompanied by an epistle in Greek. She also sent a copy to Archbishop Parker, who caused it to be printed and published under the sanction of his authority, in 1564, rendering thereby immense assistance to the cause of the Reformation. Never were talents and erudition more worthily used than by this estimable woman.

She died at Gorhambury, in the year 1600, and was buried in St. Michael's Church, at St. Albans, where, twenty-six years afterwards, the most illustrious of her sons was, by his own especial direction, interred near her grave.

Elizabeth, the third daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, was born about the year 1529. Her first husband was Sir Thomas Hobby, of Bisham, in Berkshire, who died when ambassador at Paris, July 13, 1566, leaving his widow with four children. Her second husband was John Lord Russell eldest son of Francis, second Earl of Bedford, by whom she had a son, who died young, and two daughters, one of them being the Maid-of-Honour, buried in Westminster Abbey, who died from the prick of a needle. Lady Russell wrote epitaphs in Greek, Latin, and English for her lost relations and friends, and letters in English; one of the latter, addressed to her brother-in-law, Lord Burleigh, shows her to have been a woman of great sense, rigorous justice, and severe temper. To her attaches the

terrible tradition of having beaten her youngest son' Hobby, to death, for blotting his copy-book.

She translated from the French into English a tract entitled, 'A Way of Reconciliation of a good and learned man touching the true Nature and Substance of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Sacrament.' It was printed in London, in 1605, and dedicated to her last surviving daughter, Lady Somerset.

Lady Russell was buried at Bisham, Berks.

Catherine, fourth daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, was born about the year 1530. She married Mr. afterwards Sir Henry Killigrew, of Cornwall. She was famous in her day for her skill in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages, and for her Greek and Latin verses. On her own approaching death she wrote the following:—

"Dormio nunc Domino, Domini virtute resurgam;
Et σωτῆρα meum carne videbo meâ.
Mortua ne dicar, fruitur pars altera Christo:
Et surgam capiti, tempore, tota, meo."

Of which Ballard gives this English translation:—

"To God I sleep, but I in God shall rise;
And in the flesh my Lord and Saviour see,
Call me not dead, my soul to Christ is fled,
And soon both soul and body joined shall be."

Various eulogistic epitaphs lead to the inference that she died early, and that her piety was as eminent as her mental endowments. She was buried in the chancel of St. Thomas's Church, Vintry Ward, London.

Anne Countess of Oxford.

To this band of brilliants belongs as a pendant, Anne Cecil, eldest daughter of Lord Burleigh and of his second wife, Mildred Cooke. She married Edward Vere, Earl of Oxford. died June 6th, 1588, and was buried in West-

minster Abbey. The Countess contributed four epitaphs in English verse, written on the death of her son, to the 'Diana' of John Southern. The only one quoted by Park is affected and awkward in style, heathen in sentiment, and utterly heartless. Her lustre appears to have been not inherent, but derived from her illustrious parents, kinswomen, and husband.

Margaret Ascham.

Margaret How was a wealthy gentlewoman, who, in the year 1554, became the wife of the eminent scholar Roger Ascham. He died in 1568, and posterity are indebted to her for the preservation of his celebrated work, 'The Schoolmaster,' which she published in 1570, with a dedication to Sir William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burleigh, written by herself. The date of her death is uncertain; she is supposed to have shared her husband's grave in St. Sepulchre's Church, London.

Anne Wheathill.

In the 'Censura Literaria,' vol. x. p. 109, the following title is given of a work now scarce:—"A Handfull of wholesom (though homeley) Hearbs, gathered out of the goodly garden of God's most Holy Word; for the common benefit and comfortable exercise of all such as are devoutly disposed. Collected and dedicated to all religious Ladies, Gentlewomen, and others; by Anne Wheathill, Gentlewoman. Imprinted at London by H. Denham, 1584."

It is quaintly inscribed:—"To all Ladies, Gentlewomen, and others, which love true religion and virtue, and be devoutly disposed: grace, mercy, and peace, in Christ Jesus.

"For a testimony to all the world, how I have and do (I praise God) bestow the precious treasure of time, even

now in the state of my virginity or maidenhood; lo here I dedicate to all good ladies, gentlewomen, and others, who have a desire to invocate and call upon the name of the Lord, a small handfull of grose hearbs; which I have presumed to gather out of the garden of God's most holy word. Not that there is any unpureness therein, but that, (peradventure) my rudeness may be found to have plucked them up unreverentle and without zeal."

Who or what Anne Wheathill was, the writer has vainly tried to ascertain.

Sir Richard and Dame Elizabeth Wheathell, and their son Sir Robert Wheathell, are mentioned in the second and third volumes of the 'Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies;' and several epistles written by Lady Wheathell are printed there, in which she bitterly complains to Lord Cromwell of her son, with whom, being then a widow, she was at variance. Probably Anne Wheathill was a sister of Sir Robert.

Frances Sydney, Countess of Sussex, by her last will and testament, founded Sydney Sussex College, Cambridge, in the year 1598.

CHAPTER IV.

A.D. 1600-1650.

Queen Elizabeth — Elizabeth Grymston — Elizabeth Jane Leon — The Lady Elizabeth Carew — Mary Countess of Pembroke — The Lady Mary Wroth — Elizabeth Countess of Lincoln — Anne Countess of Arundel.

"If they have nothing else, the least gifted of them have at least something of the freshness and airiness of that balmy morn, some tones caught from their greater contemporaries, some echoes of the spirit of music that then filled the universal air."—Craik's 'Sketches of the History of Literature and Learning in England," vol. iii., p. 127.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

ELIZABETH TUDOR, the only child of King Henry VIII. and Queen Anne Boleyn, was born on the 7th of September, 1533, crowned Queen of England, January 15, 1558, and died March 24, 1603. Elaborately educated, both by appointed teachers and by the events and circumstances of life, she failed so to profit by them as to become either an amiable woman or a good Christian. The arrogant sagacity of the Tudor, and the coquettish levity of the Boleyn, were to the last conjoined and unitedly predominant in her character, unsoftened and unhallowed by time or piety: but her invariable and perfect self-possession in the most painful vicissitudes and the most sudden emergencies commands respect. How much tutors had to do with the boasted performances of erudite young ladies is made evident by a brief survey of Queen Elizabeth's

studies: she, under the guidance of the learned William Grindal, translated, when only eleven years of age, from French verse into English prose, 'The Mirror, or Glass for a Sinful Soul;' and at twelve, from English into Latin, French, and Italian, Queen Catherine Parr's collection of 'Prayers and Meditations;' and into English from the French, 'The Meditations of Margaret Queen of Navarre.' William Grindal dying, the Princess Elizabeth, after her father's death, chose for her preceptor the celebrated Roger Ascham; and, having already become conversant with the Greek and Latin languages, zealously pursued the study of their literature. She also devoted much time to the works of Melanchthon and to the Holy Scriptures. She spoke five languages. She read Isocrates and Sophocles in the original Greek, translated the Hiero and Simonides from Xenophon, and wrote a commentary upon Plato. Besides these scholastic exercises, her orations, speeches, and letters afford proofs of her extraordinary knowledge and sagacity. She acquired in her day a high reputation as a poet; and Puttenham, whose 'Art of English Poesy' was published in 1589, after extolling Sir Philip Sydney, Chaloner, Spenser, Sir Walter Raleigh, and others, adds: "But last in recital and first in degree is the Queen, our Sovereign Lady, whose learned, delicate, noble muse easily surmounteth all the rest that have written before her time or since for sense, sweetness, and subtilty, be it in the ode, elegy, epigram, or any other kind of poem, heroic or lyric, wherein it shall please her pen, even by so much odds as her own excellent estate and degree exceedeth all the rest of her most humble vassals." In the true spirit of a crouching vassal this egregious flattery was certainly administered; and it seems to have been a tacit law of the Elizabethan Court, that in all

things practised by the Queen her supreme and excellent pre-eminence must be acknowledged.

Edward Bolton, a critic of English literature, although not setting a good example of English style, writing in or about the year 1616, says: "Queen Elizabeth's verses, those which I have seen and read, extant in the elegant, witty, and artificial book of the 'Art of English Poetry,' the work, as the fame is, of one of her gentlemen pensioners, Puttenham, are *princely as her prose.*" * This is ambiguous praise, and may perhaps be construed to convey a covert censure.

When a state-prisoner at Woodstock, during her sister's reign, Elizabeth wrote the following verses with charcoal on a shutter:—

"Oh Fortune, how thy restless wavering state
Hath fraught with cares my troubled wit!
Witness this present prison, whither Fate
Could bear me, and the joys I quit.
Thou causedest the guilty to be loosed
From bands wherein are innocents enclosed,
Causing the guiltless to be straight reserved,
And freeing those that death hath well deserved.
But by her envy can be nothing wrought,
So God send to my foes all they have thought.
A.D. MDLV. ELIZABETH, Prisoner."†

The tone is heathen and the spirit malevolent, but the language and versification are not below mediocrity. The chief fault lies in the change of Fortune's person in the last couplet from the second of the singular to the possessive pronoun. The line—

"And freeing those that death hath well deserved,"

looks at first sight like bad grammar; but, supposing Death a personification, it may be understood that he *hath* deserved to have *those* guilty persons, who would

* Warton's 'History of English Poetry,' vol. iii. sect. li.
† Bishop Percy's 'Reliques,' vol. ii., p. 134, ed. 1841.

seem more naturally to form the nominative case, and require the substitution of *have*.

Bishop Percy* gives a distich of the Queen's preserved by Puttenham :—

> "Never think you Fortune can bear the sway
> Where Virtue's force can cause her to delay."

Virtue, with Queen Elizabeth, was a synonym of Intrepidity.

Park, in his additions to Walpole's 'Catalogue,' cites a rebus made by Queen Elizabeth upon a Mr. Noel :—

> "The word of denial and letter of fifty
> Is that gentleman's name that will never be thrifty."

This for an offhand couplet is not amiss.

It is a humiliating fact for the grave consideration of female aspirants to social and mental equality with men, that in the days of Spenser and Shakspeare the best poetess in England was reputed to be the highly-educated Queen Elizabeth. The fulsome ascriptions of contemporary praise were merely the reaction of her personal assumption. Bolton's remark especially applies to the following 'Sonnet,' which Puttenham informs us was written by Her Majesty to intimate her knowledge of the faction among her courtiers in favour of the imprisoned Queen of Scots :—

> "The doubt of future foes
> Exiles my present joy ;
> And wit me warns to shun such snares
> As threaten mine annoy.
>
> For falsehood now doth flow,
> And subjects' faith doth ebb,
> Which would not be if reason ruled,
> Or wisdom wove the web.

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* See his 'Reliques.'

But clouds of joy untried
Do cloak aspiring minds,
Which turn to rain of late repent
By course of changed winds.
The top of hope supposed
The root of ruth will be,
And fruitless all their graffed guiles,
As shortly all shall see.
Then dazzled eyes with pride,
Which great ambition blinds,
Shall be unscaled by worthy wights,
Whose foresight falsehood finds.
The Daughter of Debate,
That discord aye doth sow,
Shall reap no gain where former rule
Hath taught still peace to grow.
No foreign banished wight
Shall anchor in this port:
Our realm it brooks no stranger force,
Let them elsewhere resort.
Our rusty sword with rest
Shall first his edge employ
To poll the tops that seek such change
Or gape for such like joy.* 1569."

This is the "ditty of Her Majesty's own making," which Master Puttenham praises as "passing sweet and harmonical." The ferocious threat which it utters was duly executed upon the Duke of Norfolk and other partisans of the Queen of Scots.

Queen Elizabeth's elaborate duplicity is completely revealed by comparing Puttenham's explanation of the purpose for which it was written with the extract from the 'Nugæ Antiquæ' of Sir John Harrington, which shows that the crafty Queen had contrived that Lady Willoughby should "covertly get it on Her Majesty's tablet," and thus make the ditty known to the parties for whom it was intended.

By the impulsion of a resolute will inferior faculties may often be made to accomplish great things, and to produce an exaggerated impression of intellectual power,

* Bishop Percy's 'Reliques,' vol. ii. pp. 215-17.

just as a strong and heavy hammer may drive a weak and crooked tin-tack to its home, and clinch it firmly. The literary productions of Queen Elizabeth indicate that her abilities were thus enforced, and that they were in their nature rather practical than contemplative. Her letters indicate mental cultivation, great astuteness, and a peculiar power of adapting her style to suit her purposes.

Queen Elizabeth was a benefactress of Jesus College, Oxford, and its nominal founder. Hugh Price, a native of Brecon, who graduated at Oxford as D.C.L. in the year 1525, became subsequently a prebendary of Rochester Cathedral, and treasurer of the diocese of St. David's; and desiring in his old age to lay out his property for the good of his fellow-countrymen, the natives of Wales, presented a petition to Her Majesty, that she would be pleased to found a college at Oxford for their especial use, and would allow him to endow it. This request was readily granted; Dr. Price gave his Breconshire estates and money for accumulation; the Queen allowed timber from the royal forests of Shotover and Stowe to be used for the collegiate buildings, and thus cheaply acquired the fame which truly belongs to the generous and unostentatious Welshman. In the year 1560 Queen Elizabeth founded Westminster School; and in the year 1591 she founded Trinity College, Dublin.

Granger describes more than thirty-nine engravings from portraits by Ant. More, Hillyard, Isaac Oliver, J. Oliver, Vander Werff, and others, and several historical pieces, in which this Queen is represented as the chief personage. There is something truly regal in her aspect and mien; and, notwithstanding a disproportionately high nose, she must undoubtedly have been very handsome.

Elizabeth Grymeston.

Elizabeth, daughter of Martin Bernye, of Gunston, Nor-

folk, married Christopher, youngest son of Thomas Grymeston, of Grymeston, in the county of York, who shared the same ancestry as the Grimstons, Earls of Verulam. For the instruction of a son, she compiled in her last illness a work, entitled, 'Miscellanea, Meditations, Memoratives. By Elizabeth Grymeston. Non est rectum quod a Deo non est directum.' London, 1604.

Elizabeth Jane Leon.

Elizabeth Jane Weston, of Sutton, in the county of Surrey, spent the greater part of her life in Germany, where she married a gentleman named John Leon, who held an employment at the Emperor's court. Few particulars of her life are known. She attained to high celebrity as a linguist and Latin poet, and her collected works were published at Prague in the year 1606.

The Lady Elizabeth Carew.

Whether Lady Elizabeth Carew was the wife of Sir Henry Carew, or a daughter of George Carew, Earl of Totness, or who she was, neither 'Burke's Peerage and Baronetage' for 1859, nor 'Burke's Extinct Baronetcies,' nor any other book at present within reach of the writer affords satisfactory information. Neither Walpole nor Park record her name, but she is mentioned by Mr. Robert Chambers, in his 'Cyclopædia of English Literature,' as the supposed author of the tragedy of 'Mariam,' which was published in 1613. The following stanzas have great merit:—

Part of the Chorus in the Fourth Act of 'Mariam the Fair Queen of Jewry,' by Lady Elizabeth Carew.

"The fairest action of our human life
Is scorning to revenge an injury;
For who forgives without a further strife
His adversary's heart to him doth tie.
And 'tis a firmer conquest, truly said,
To win the heart, than overthrow the head.

If we a worthy enemy do find,
To yield to worth, it must be nobly done;
But if of baser metal be his mind,
In base revenge there is no honour won.
Who would a worthy courage overthrow?
And who would wrestle with a worthless foe?

We say our hearts are great and cannot yield;
Because they cannot yield it proves them poor;
Great hearts are tasked beyond their power but seld,
The weakest lion will the loudest roar.
Truth's school for certain doth this same allow,
High-heartedness doth sometimes teach to bow.

A noble heart doth teach a virtuous scorn;
To scorn to owe a duty overlong;
To scorn to be for benefits forborne;
To scorn to lie, to scorn to do a wrong;
To scorn to bear an injury in mind;
To scorn a free-born heart slave-like to bind.

But if for wrongs we needs revenge must have,
Then be our vengeance of the noblest kind;
Do we his body from our fury save,
And let our hate prevail against his mind.
What can 'gainst him a greater vengeance be,
Than make his foe more worthy far than he?"

The 'Censura Literaria,' vol. i. p. 153, confutes Oldys's suggestion that the author of 'Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry,' was the wife of Sir Henry *Carey*, to whom Davies, of Hereford, dedicated his 'Muses' Sacrifice,' 1612; but in vol. vi. p. 171, on further consideration, adopts that supposition, and states that she was probably the daughter of Chief Baron Tanfield, and wife of that Sir Henry Carey who, in 1620, was created Viscount Falkland. If so, she was the mother of the renowned Lucius Carey, second Lord Falkland, who fell at the battle of Newbury, September 20, 1643; of Lawrence Carey, who fell in battle against the Irish in 1542; and of Anne wife of James second Earl of Home.

Although the word "Carew" is now pronounced with the accent on the second syllable, it was probably accented on the first in the Tudor and Stuart times. Carew Castle

in Pembrokeshire, is still locally pronounced Carey, the Welsh name being Caerau, which signifies "fortified walls." Caeru is the verb to "wall or fortify." *

Mary Countess of Pembroke.

Mary Sydney was the daughter of Sir Henry Sydney, Lord President of Wales and Lord Deputy of Ireland, and of his wife, the Lady Mary Dudley, eldest daughter of John Duke of Northumberland, and sister of Lord Guilford Dudley, of Ambrose Earl of Warwick, and of Robert Earl of Leicester.

Mary Sydney's eldest brother was the admirable Sir Philip, whose intellectual pursuits she shared, and for whom she cherished the most tender affection. She had three sisters, and two younger brothers, Sir Robert and Sir Thomas. Sir Robert, having done good services to his Sovereign and to the State, and being one of the most accomplished men of his time, was, some years after the death of his maternal uncle and godfather, created Earl of Leicester.†

In the year 1576, she became the third wife of Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke. They had two sons, who successively inherited the earldom. Her husband died January 19, 1601. The countess died September 25, 1621, at her house in Aldersgate-street, London, and was buried in the chancel of Salisbury Cathedral.

She translated from the original French Philip Mornay's 'Discourse of Life and Death,' and 'The Tragedy of Antony;' the former in May, 1590, and the latter in the November of the same year. Both these translations were published during her life. She assisted Sir Philip Sydney

* See Spurrell's or any other Welsh Dictionary.

† See Collins's 'Memoirs of the Sydneys,' pp. 96-97.

in his version of the Psalms, wrote 'A Pastoral Dialogue in Praise of Astrea' (Queen Elizabeth), which was published in Davison's 'Poetical Rhapsody,' 1602; and other pieces, of which the Elegy on her favourite brother's death is the most remarkable. He was killed at Zutphen in 1585.

In the Preface to his celebrated pastoral Sir Philip dedicates it to her as to "a principal ornament of the family of the Sydneys," and the name he gave it—'The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia'—is her imperishable monument. It was probably thus designated by way of contradistinction from the Arcadia of the Italian poet Sannazaro, which in sweetness and languid grace it evidently resembles. The chorus to the tragedy of 'Antonius,' and the 'Dialogue between Two Shepherds,' from the 'Astrea,' given in Park's Walpole's 'Catalogue,' indicate a highly cultivated and vigorous mind, and great skill in versification.

Her merits are eulogized by Daniel in his 'Delia,' in the 'Astrophel' of Spenser, and in the 'Epitaph' by Ben Jonson.

Spenser, after thirty-five stanzas of monody on Sir Philip Sydney, thus introduces, in his thirty-sixth, the elegy written by Lady Pembroke:—

> "But first his sister, that Clarinda hight,
> That gentlest shepherdess that lives this day,
> And most resembling, both in shape and sprite,
> Her brother dear, began this doleful lay.
> Which, lest I mar the sweetness of the verse,
> In sort as she it sung, I will rehearse."

The Arcadian style of the composition accords with the taste of the deceased, and is well sustained; but it mars the genuine utterance of sisterly affection and of exalted faith, and hope, and love, by the adoption of artificial circumstances and heathen accessories.

In flowing sweetness, in delicacy and elegance, both of thought and expression, this elegy is worthy of its place; engrafted, like a white rose, among the deeply-tinted and odorous flowers of Spenser's genius.

"Ay me! to whom shall I my case complain,
That may compassion my impatient grief?
Or where shall I unfold my inward pain,
That my enriven heart may find relief?
Shall I unto the heavenly powers it show?
Or unto earthly men that dwell below?

To heavens? ah they, alas! the authors were,
And workers of my unremedied woe;
For they foresee what to us happens here,
And they foresaw, yet suffered this be so.
From them comes good, from them comes also ill,
That which they made, who can them warn to spill?

To men? ah they, alas! like wretched be,
And subject to the heavens' ordinance,
Bound to abide whatever they devise;
Their best redress is their best sufferance.
How then can they, like wretched, comfort me?
The which no less need comforted to be.

Then to myself will I my sorrow mourn,
Sith none alive like sorrowful remains,
And to myself my plaints shall back return,
To pay their usury with double pains.
The woods, the hills, the rivers shall resound
The mournful accent of my sorrow's ground.

Woods, hills, and rivers now are desolate,
Sith he is gone the which them all did grace,
And all the fields do wail their widowed state,
Sith death their fairest flower did late deface.
The fairest flower in field that ever grew
Was Astrophel; that *was* we all may rue.

What cruel hand of cursed foe unknown
Hath cropt the stalk which bore so fair a flower.
Untimely cropt, before it well were grown,
And clean defaced in untimely hour.
Great loss to all that ever him did see,
Great loss to all, but greatest loss to me.

Break now your girlonds, Oh ye shepherds' lasses,
Sith the fair flower wich them adorn'd is gone.
The flower which them adorned is gone to ashes.
Never again let lass put girlond on.
Instead of girlond, wear sad cypress now,
And bitter elder, broken from the bough.

Ne ever sing the love layes wich he made.
Who ever made such layes of love as he?
Ne ever read the riddles wich he said
Unto your selves, to make you merry glee.
Your merry glee is now laid all abed,
Your merry-maker now, alas, is dead.

Death, the devourer of all world's delight,
Hath robbed you, and reft from me my joy.
Both you and me, and all the world he quite
Hath robb'd of joyance, and left sad annoy.
Joy of the world and shepherds' pride was he,
Shepherds hope never like again to see.

Oh, death, that hath us of such riches reft,
Tell us, at least, what hast thou with it done?
What is become of him whose flower here left
Is but the shadow of his likeness gone?
Scarce like the shadow of that which he was;
Nought like, but that he like a shade did pass.

But that immortal spirit, which was deckt
With all the dowries of celestial grace;
By sovereign choice from th' heavenly quires select,
And lineally derived from angels' race;
Oh! what is now of it become aread:
Ay, me! can so divine a thing be dead?

Ah, no! it is not dead, ne can it die,
But lives for aye, in blissful paradise;
Where, like a new-born babe, it soft doth lie
In bed of lilies, wrapped in tender wise,
And compast all about with roses sweet,
And dainty violets from head to feet.

There thousand birds, all of celestial brood,
To him do sweetly carol day and night;
And with strange notes, of him well understood,
Lull him asleep in angel-like delight;
Whilst in sweet dream to him presented be
Immortal beauties, which no eye may see.

But he them sees, and takes exceeding pleasure
Of their divine aspects, appearing plain,
And kindling love in him above all measure;
Sweet love, still joyous, never feeling pain.
For what so goodly form he there doth see,
He may enjoy, from jealous rancor free.

There liveth he in everlasting bliss,
Sweet spirit! never fearing more to die;
Ne dreading harm from any foe of his;
Ne fearing savage beasts' more cruelty;
Whilst we hear wretches wail his private lack,
And with vain vows do often call him back.

But live thou there still happy, happy spirit!
And give us leave thee here thus to lament:
Not thee, that doest thy heaven's joy inherit,
But our own selves, who here in dole are drent.
Thus do we weep and wail, and wear our eyes,
Mourning in others our own miseries."

No impartial critic, who compares this elegy with the verses of Queen Elizabeth, can for an instant hesitate in awarding the palm of victory to Lady Pembroke.

Ben Jonson's Epitaph upon the Countess of Pembroke has acquired perhaps a higher reputation than it deserves:—

"Underneath this sable herse,
Lies the subject of all verse;
Sydney's sister, Pembroke's mother;
Death, ere thou hast killed another,
Fair, and learned, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee!
Marble piles let no man raise
To her name for after days;
Some kind woman, born as she,
Reading this, like Niobe
Shall turn marble, and become
Both her mourner and her tomb."

Of these twelve lines it may be observed, that the two first make a false assertion, for Lady Pembroke was not in any sense "the subject of all verse."

The third line justly recounts it as a privilege that she was "Sydney's sister;" but the fact that she was "Pembroke's mother" tended neither to her happiness when living, nor to her honour when dead. The reason assigned in the six closing lines why no "marble piles" should be raised to her name is extravagantly absurd; and the real merit of the epitaph dwells exclusively in the fourth, fifth, and sixth lines, which are of exquisite beauty:—

"Death! ere thou hast killed another,
Fair, and learned, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee."

Granger mentions two engravings of her; in one of them

she is represented with a Psalter in her hand. There is one, apparently taken from a portrait painted after she had passed the prime of life, in Horace Walpole's 'Catalogue.'

The Lady Mary Wroth.

Alluding to the sixteen sonnets addressed by Chapman "to the chief nobility," Warton remarks, in a note,* "Lady Mary Wroth, here mentioned, wife of Sir Robert Wroth, was much courted by the wits of this age. She wrote a romance called 'Urania,' in imitation of Sir Philip Sydney's 'Arcadia;' see Jonson's 'Epigr.' 103, 105." It would appear from the concluding references, that they were the source from whence Warton derived his knowledge of Lady Mary Wroth and her production. In a note to the previous section, he mentions a Sir Thomas Wroth, Knight, as the translator of the second part of Virgil's 'Æneid,' April 4, 1620.

Lady Mary Wroth is not mentioned by Walpole, Park, or Granger. Ballard in the preface to his 'Memoirs of British Ladies,' mentions Lady Mary Neville, Lady Anne Southwell, Lady Honor Hay, Lady Mary Wroth, and others, as persons of distinguished parts and learning, of whom he has been able to collect little else but that bare fact. Burke's 'Book of Extinct Baronetcies' gives the pedigree of the Wroths of Blenden Hall, Kent, only from 1666 to 1722, naming the first baronet as the descendant of an ancient family. To look for one particular Lady Mary among the daughters of peers seemed hopeless labour, but research with another object has happily guided the writer to the parents of Lady Mary Wroth. She was the eldest daughter of Robert Sydney, first Earl of Leicester,†

* 'History of English Poetry,' vol. iii. sect. lix.

† See 'Memoirs of the Sydneys,' by Arthur Collins, vol. i. p. 120.

brother and heir to the celebrated Sir Philip Sydney: her mother, his first wife, was Barbara, only daughter and heir of John Gamage, Esq., a Glamorganshire gentleman. Lady Mary had seven sisters and four brothers: of the latter, the youngest succeeded his father as second Earl of Leicester of that family. She was married at Penshurst on the 16th of September, 1602, to Sir Robert Wroth, Knight, of Durants, in the parishes of Enfield and Edmonton, in the county of Middlesex, and of Loughton Hall in Essex. The military captains under her father's command in the Netherlands testified their respect and admiration towards her on this occasion by subscribing 200*l.* to buy "a chain of pearl" for the bride,* or to be otherwise disposed of at her pleasure. Sir William Browne, writing to her father from Flushing, October 19, 1604, says: "We have all received, by Josias, my Lady Wroth's remembrance of very fair gloves." Her son Robert Wroth is subsequently mentioned in one of Lord Leicester's letters.† It is to be regretted that so meagre an account is all that can be collected from the published records of Penshurst. The marriage of her great-granddaughter, an heiress, conveyed the Essex estates of the Wroths into the family of the Zuleisteins Earls of Rochford.

Lady Mary's attention was probably directed in early youth to the works of her celebrated uncle Sir Philip Sydney, and of her aunt Mary Countess of Pembroke, who was probably her godmother. The date of her death has not been ascertained. She is identified beyond the possibility of mistake by the mention made in the Sydney Memoirs of Ben Jonson's Epigrams in praise of her

* 'Sydney Letters and Memorials of State,' vol. ii. p. 305.

† Mention of the Wroths is made in the same volume, pp. 82, 89, 309, and 352.

husband and herself. A Sir Thomas Wroth was her grandson.

Elizabeth Countess of Lincoln.

Elizabeth, daughter and coheir of Sir Henry Knevet, of Charlton, Wiltshire, was married to Thomas Clinton, third Earl of Lincoln. She had eighteen children, and on the strength of this experience wrote a book entitled 'The Countess of Lincoln's Nursery.' It was first printed in 1621, and again in 1622 and in 1628. The date of her death is uncertain. The Earl, her husband, died in 1618.

Anne Countess of Arundel.

Anne, sister and coheir of Thomas last Lord Dacre, married Philip Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, who died a prisoner in the Tower in 1595. She wrote many letters to her family in what the first literary Mr. Lodge terms "the best style of that time;" and some verses on the death of her lord, which apparently formed part of a long poem. Lady Arundel died April 30, 1630.

In the year 1613, Dorothy, daughter of Sir William Petre, and widow of Nicholas Wadham, Esq., of Merefield, Somersetshire, founded Wadham College, Oxford, in compliance with the last will and testament of her husband. Granger mentions a mezzotinto engraving of her by Faber.

CHAPTER V.

A.D. 1650-1675.

Remarks on the period 1650-75 — Elizabeth Countess of Kent — Elizabeth Countess of Bridgwater — Catherine Philips — Lucy Hutchinson — Margaret Duchess of Newcastle — Anne Countess of Dorset, Pembroke, and Montgomery.

"The writers of this and the succeeding generation understood their own character better than it has been understood by their successors; they called themselves wits, instead of poets, and wits they were—the difference is not in degree but in kind." — SOUTHEY: Preface to 'Specimens of Later English Poets.'

IN the period now under review, instruction in the dead languages had ceased to be deemed an essential part of the education of princesses, ladies, and high-born gentlewomen. Books in English and in other modern languages had multiplied, and so many facilities were afforded for female improvement, that educated women generally superseded learned men as the principal teachers of young girls, and the scholar-like culture of the mind gave place to superficial training. The increased means of acquiring information which caused this deterioration in the upper classes, promoted the diffusion of knowledge in those next below, and the daughters of merchants and tradesmen soon began to appear among the literary women of England. The progress of literature among Englishwomen resembles what is termed in botany the centrifugal inflorescence of plants; being not like the spike of the lilac, where the lowermost blossoms first expand, but answering rather to

the cyme of the laurustinus, in which the central flowers open before the outer ones.

So distinctly had learning and well directed intelligence been recognised as the peculiar attributes of women of high social rank, that those of inferior position first distinguished for possessing them were readily received as equals among the great and fashionable personages of their day.

Elizabeth Countess of Kent.

Elizabeth, second daughter of Gilbert Talbot, seventh Earl of Shrewsbury, and wife of Henry Grey, Earl of Kent, compiled 'A Choice Manual of Rare and Select Secrets in Physic and Chirurgery,' which passed through sixteen editions. Benevolence, and the blameless vanity of liking to teach small things, are the only qualities manifested in this work. The Countess of Kent died at her house in White Friars, December 7, 1651. An engraved likeness of her in a small oval is prefixed to her book.

Elizabeth Countess of Bridgwater.

Elizabeth, second daughter of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, married John Egerton, Viscount Brackley, afterwards Earl of Bridgwater—the youth who performed at Ludlow Castle, in 1634, the part of the First Brother in Milton's Masque of Comus. Chauncey's 'History of Hertfordshire,' and Collins' 'Peerage' give copies of her monumental inscription in Gaddesden Church, which records that she wrote 'Meditations and Contemplations upon every particular chapter in the Bible.' Her beauty, accomplishments, domestic virtues, and deep piety were so thoroughly appreciated by her excellent husband, that he ordered an inscription to be placed over his own grave recording that he "enjoyed almost twenty-two years all the

happiness that a man could receive in the sweet society of the best of wives."

The Countess of Bridgwater died June 24, 1663, in the thirty-seventh year of her age. The Earl survived her twenty-three years, four months, and twelve days, "enduring, rather than enjoying life." He died October 26, 1686, aged sixty-three.

Her eldest sister, Lady Jane, who married Charles Cheyne, Esq., afterwards Viscount Newhaven, was also the authoress of a series of devout reflections, never published. Lady Jane died beloved, revered, and lamented, October 8, 1669, in the forty-eighth year of her age, and was buried in Chelsea Church, where her effigy by Bernini remains.

Catherine Philips.

Catherine, daughter of John Fowler of Bucklersbury, merchant, was born January 1, 1631. She is the first eminent Englishwoman of whom it is distinctly recorded that she was brought up at a boarding-school. In 1647, she married James Philips, Esq., of the Priory, Cardigan. Two children, a son and daughter, were the issue of this marriage. Her husband had suffered great losses in the Royalist cause; and vain attempts to retrieve his affairs, and to solace his anxieties, gave active and constant occupation to his wife. She was highly esteemed by the principal persons of her time in England, Wales, and Ireland, and died in Fleet Street of the small-pox, June 22, 1664, being thirty-three years of age, and was buried in the church of St. Bennet, Sherehog.

Granger mentions a portrait of her at Strawberry Hill, an engraving from a bust inscribed "Orinda;" and a mezzotinto by Becket.

Sir William Temple, "at the desire of Lady Temple," wrote a poem on the death of Catherine Philips, which contains the following terse and spirited eulogy:—

"Orinda! what? the glory of our stage!
Crown of her sex, and wonder of the age!
Graceful and fair in body and in mind,
She that taught fallen virtue to be kind,
Youth to be wise, mirth to be innocent,
Fame to be steady, envy to relent,
Love to be cold, and friendship to be warm,
Praise to do good, and wit to do no harm.
Orinda! that was sent the world to give
The best example how to write and live:
The queen of poets, whosoe'er 's the king,
And to whose sceptre all their homage bring;
Who more than men conceived and understood,
And more than women knew how to be good."

The poems, according to Oldys, as cited in the 'Censura Literaria,' vol. ii. p. 174, were published in 1664, and again in an enlarged edition with her tragedies of 'Pompey' and 'Horace' (translations from Corneille) in 1667; another edition appeared in 1669, and yet another in 1678; Tonson's edition in 1710 appears to have been the last. Her letters to Sir Charles Cotterill were published in 1705, under the affected title of 'Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus.'

Bishop Jeremy Taylor showed his appreciation of her mental and moral qualities by addressing to her his 'Measures and Offices of Friendship,' in 1657. Cowley wrote during her life a eulogistic 'Ode on Orinda's Poems,' in which he quaintly congratulates her on having cancelled "great Apollo's Salique law." The third stanza expresses an exaggerated degree of sincere and cordial approval.

"Thou dost my wonder, wouldst my envy raise,
If to be praised I loved more than to praise;

Where'er I see an excellence,
I must admire to see thy well-knit sense,
Thy numbers gentle, and thy fancies high,
Those as thy forehead smooth, these sparkling as thine eye.
'Tis solid, and 'tis manly all,
Or rather 'tis angelical,
For, as in angels, we
Do in thy verses see
Both improved sexes eminently meet:
They are than man more strong, and more than woman sweet."

In his 'Ode on the Death of Mrs. Catherine Philips,' Cowley praises her beauty, accomplishments, and piety; and of her literary productions, he says in the third stanza:—

"The certain proofs of our Orinda's wit
In her own lasting characters are writ,
And they will long my praise of them survive,
Though long perhaps too that may live.
The trade of glory, managed by the pen,
Though great it be, and everywhere is found,
Does bring in but small profit to us men,
'Tis by the number of the sharers drowned.
Orinda, on the female coasts of fame,
Engrosses all the goods of a poetic name."

In the fourth stanza, extolling her "hate of vice and scorn of vanities," he adds:—

"Never did spirit of the manly make,
And dipped all o'er in learning's sacred lake,
A temper more invulnerable take.
No violent passion could an entrance find
Into the tender goodness of her mind."

Then in the fifth stanza, after commending her friendship with "Leucasia"—Anne Owen—he concludes with the following beautiful lines:—

"As when a prudent man does once perceive
That in some foreign country he must live,
The language and the manners he does strive
To understand and practise here,
That he may come no stranger there:
So well Orinda did herself prepare
In this much different clime for her remove
To the glad world of poetry and love."

Specimens of her poetry can scarcely fail to disappoint the expectations raised by such eulogies; but in versification and in sentiment her compositions show an acquaintance with the literature of her day, and a cultivated preference for the best models of imitation.

AGAINST PLEASURE.—AN ODE.

"There's no such thing as pleasure here,
'Tis all a perfect cheat,
Which does but shine and disappear,
Whose charm is but deceit;
The empty bribe of yielding souls,
Which first betrays and then controls.

'Tis true it looks at distance fair;
But, if we do approach,
The fruit of Sodom will impair
And perish at a touch;
It being than in fancy less,
And we expect more than possess.

For by our pleasures we are cloyed,
And so desire is done;
Or else, like rivers, they make wide
The channels where they run;
And either way true bliss destroys,
Making us narrow, or our joys.

We covet pleasure easily,
But ne'er true bliss possess;
For many things must make it be,
But one may make it less;
Nay, were our state as we would choose it
'T would be consumed by fear to lose it.

What art thou, then, thou winged air,
More weak and swift than fame,
Whose next successor is despair,
And its attendant shame?
Th' experienced prince then reason had,
Who said of pleasure—'It is mad.'"

A COUNTRY LIFE.

"How sacred and how innocent
A country life appears;
How free from tumult, discontent,
From flattery, or fears.

This was the first and happiest life,
When man enjoyed himself,
Till pride exchanged peace for strife,
And happiness for pelf.

'T was here the poets were inspired,
Here taught the multitude;
The brave they here with honour fired,
And civilised the rude.

That golden age did entertain
No passion but of love;
The thoughts of ruling and of gain
Did ne'er their fancies move.

Them that do covet only rest,
A cottage will suffice;
It is not brave to be possessed
Of earth, but to despise.

Opinion is the rate of things,
From hence our peace doth flow;
I have a better fate than kings,
Because I think it so.

When all the stormy world doth roar,
How unconcerned am I!
I cannot fear to tumble lower,
Who never could be high.

Secure in these unenvied walls,
I think not on the state,
And pity no man's case that falls
From his ambitious height.

Silence and innocence are safe;
A heart that's nobly true
At all these little arts can laugh,
That do the world subdue."

Campbell, in his 'British Poets,' justly pronounces of Catherine Philips, that "she cannot be said to have been a woman of genius, but her verses betoken an interesting and placid enthusiasm of heart and a cultivated taste, that form a beautiful specimen of female character."

Mrs. Hutchinson.

Lucy, the second daughter of Sir Allen Apsley, Lieutenant of the Tower, and the eldest daughter of his third wife, a daughter of Sir John St. John, of Lidiard Tregoze,

Wiltshire, was born in the Tower of London, in the year 1620. Both her parents were excellent persons, and they spared neither care nor expense in the education of their promising and precocious child. When only seven years old she was provided with no less than eight "tutors" to instruct her "in several qualities, languages, music, dancing, writing, and needlework."* It is to be presumed that some of these "tutors" were of the feminine gender. Books, however, were her chief delight, and she outstripped her brothers in Latin and other scholastic acquirements. She profited also by attending to the conversation of her father's wise and well-informed guests, and by the opportunities which her mother afforded her of hearing the best preachers. The noble and generous qualities of her parents, too, made an early and indelible impression upon her observant and thoughtful mind. In 1630, her father died, and the widow, with her family, removed to Richmond. On the 3rd of July, 1638, Lucy Apsley was married in the church of St. Andrew's, Holborn, to John, eldest son of Sir Thomas Hutchinson, of Owthorpe, in the county of Nottingham. Making their home at first with her mother in London, they soon afterwards moved their joint households to the "Blue House," in Enfield Chace, where Mr. Hutchinson devoted two years to the study of divinity. In 1641, having then three children, she went with her husband to Owthorpe, where they resided very happily for a few months, their tranquillity being at last disturbed only by the breaking out of the Civil War. Mr. Hutchinson, with conscientious care, examined the records of history and the claims of the contending parties; and, being thoroughly convinced of the unlawfulness of the King's

* See the autobiographical sketch included in her 'Life of Colonel Hutchinson.'

proceedings and the justice of the Parliament's resistance to the manifest infringement of civil rights, he accepted their commission as lieutenant-colonel in Colonel Pierrepont's regiment of militia; and on the 29th of June, 1643, undertook, as governor, the defence of Nottingham Castle; a post of great importance, as that fortress commanded the principal pass between the northern and southern counties. Against all sorts of disadvantages, want of proper defensive works, provisions, and money, against open assaults and treacherous intrigues, his skill and courage enabled him successfully to maintain this position until the close of the war in 1647. His father, Sir Thomas, had died in London in 1643, and Colonel Hutchinson, inheriting the Owthorpe estate, returned when his military duties were over to its mansion, which had been spoiled, stripped, and ruined by the royal garrisons of Shelford and Wiverton. Having been deprived of the rents for several years, he found himself ever after an impoverished and embarrassed man. In 1648, he removed his wife and his large family of children to London, and took his seat in Parliament as a representative of the county of Nottingham. Much against his will, he was nominated one of the commissioners for the trial of King Charles, and under a mistaken sense of duty gave his vote for that king's death.

In 1649, Colonel Hutchinson was chosen a member of the Council of State, and had many opportunities of enriching himself; but he declined them all, seeking only to recover the sums justly due to him, and to engage only in such employments as would not separate him from his home. Having arranged his affairs and rebuilt his house at Owthorpe, he passed much of his time there, taking no prominent part in politics after Oliver Cromwell had

entered upon the protectorate, but actively devoting himself to the improvement of his paternal estate, to the promotion of his neighbours' welfare, and the education of his children, while indulging his taste for literature and the fine arts, manly exercises, and social hospitality. In the words of Mrs. Hutchinson, "He spared not any cost for the education of both his sons and daughters in languages, sciences, music, dancing, and all other qualities (*i. e.* qualifications) befitting their father's house. He was himself their instructor in humility, sobriety, and all godliness and virtue, which he rather strove to make them exercise with love and delight than by constraint." Thus Colonel Hutchinson and his wife Lucy spent their beneficent and happy days until 1660, the year of the Restoration; and to some placid hour of casual solitude occurring at Owthorpe the following verses from her eloquent pen owe their origin:—

"All sorts of men through various labours press,
To the same end—contented quietness;
Great princes vex their labouring thoughts to be
Possessed of an unbounded sovereignty;
The hardy soldier doth all toils sustain
That he may conquer first, and after reign;
Th' industrious merchant ploughs the angry seas
That he may bring home wealth, and live at ease.
These none of them attain; for sweet repose
But seldom to the splendid palace goes;
A troop of restless passions wander there,
And only private lives are free from care.
Sleep to the cottage bringeth happy nights,
But to the court hung round with flaring lights,
Which th' office of the vanished day supply,
His image only comes to close the eye,
But gives the troubled mind no ease of care,
While country slumbers undisturbed are;
Where, if the active fancy dreams present,
They bring no horrors to the innocent.
Ambition doth incessantly aspire,
And each advance leads on to new desire;
Nor yet can riches av'rice satisfy,
For want and wealth together multiply:

Nor can voluptuous men more fulness find,
For enjoyed pleasures leave their stings behind.
He's only rich who knows no want; he reigns
Whose will no severe tyranny constrains;
And he alone possesseth true delight
Whose spotless soul no guilty fears affright.
This freedom in the country life is found,
Where innocence and safe delights abound.
Here man's a prince; his subjects ne'er repine
When on his back their wealthy fleeces shine:
If for his appetite the fattest die,
Those who survive will raise no mutiny;
His table is with home-got dainties crowned,
With friends, not flatterers, encompassed round
No spies nor traitors on his trencher wait,
Nor is his mirth confined to rules of state;
An armed guard he neither hath nor needs,
Nor fears a poisoned morsel when he feeds;
Bright constellations hang above his head,
Beneath his feet are flow'ry carpets spread;
The merry birds delight him with their songs,
And healthful air his happy life prolongs;
At harvest merrily his flocks he shears,
And in cold weather their warm fleeces wears;
Unto his ease he fashions all his clothes;
His cup with uninfected liquor flows:
The vulgar breath doth not his thoughts elate,
Nor can he be o'erwhelmed by their hate.
Yet, if ambitiously he seeks for fame,
One village feast shall gain a greater name
Than his who wears the imperial diadem,
Whom the rude multitude do still condemn.
Sweet peace and joy his blest companions are;
Fear, sorrow, envy, lust, revenge, and care,
And all that troop which breeds the world's offence,
With pomp and majesty are banished thence.
What court, then, can such liberty afford,
Or where is man so uncontroll'd a lord?"

Colonel Hutchinson was upon principle a republican, and so true a patriot that neither Cromwell nor King Charles II. could, either by temptations or persecutions, shake his disinterested adherence to the cause of the Commonwealth.

In the first parliament of King Charles II. Colonel Hutchinson was the representative of the town of Notting-

ham, and went up to London in April to take his place in the House. The Court party bearing him malice for his conduct during the Civil War, and dissatisfied with the quiet moderation of his present conduct, attempted to erase his name from the Act of Oblivion, but the fervent intercession of his royalist brother-in-law, Sir Allen Apsley, prevailed in his favour, and Colonel Hutchinson withdrew to his tranquil home at Owthorpe. In October, 1663, he was arrested, and in November committed to the Tower upon an accusation of treason. His wife and his eldest son Thomas accompanied him to London, but for several weeks afterwards were not allowed to see him. His enemies failing to implicate him in a conspiracy which they called "the Northern Plot," but determined on wreaking their malice, had him removed from the Tower to Sandown Castle, near Deal, where, after an imprisonment of eleven months, he died from harsh treatment, September 11, 1664, at the age of forty-eight. Through all his troubles his faithful wife ministered to his necessities, brought his children and friends about him for his comfort, managed his affairs, and did all that the most affectionate heart and the most comprehensive and acute intellect could suggest to procure his liberation and to soften his captivity. She had his remains deposited in the family vault at Owthorpe; but the date of her own death and the place of her own interment have not been ascertained. The 'Memoir of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, by his Widow Lucy,' is the most perfect piece of biography ever written by a woman, and the view which it incidentally reveals of her own character, conduct, and abilities, entitles her to rank among the most admirable women of her country. Indeed, it may be doubted whether any other person of her sex, in

any country, ever possessed as fine a combination of mental power and domestic ability with affections at once so tender and so true. There is an engraved portrait of her, with one of her little sons, prefixed to a volume of the first edition of her work.

As a specimen of her prose style, Mrs. Hutchinson's description of her husband's character is subjoined, though nothing short of a perusal of the whole work can convey a just notion of the vigour of her mind, and the skilful ease with which she moulded thought into language.

"To number his virtues is to give the epitome of his life, which was nothing else but a progress from one degree of virtue to another, till, in a short time, he arrived to that height which many longer lives could never reach, and had I but the power of rightly disposing and relating them, his single example would be more instructive than all the rules of the best moralists, for his practice was of a more Divine extraction, drawn from the Word of God and wrought up by the assistance of His Spirit; therefore, in the head of all his virtues, I shall set that which was the head and spring of them all—his Christianity—for this alone is the true royal blood that runs through the whole body of virtue, and every pretender to that glorious family, who hath no tincture of it, is an impostor and a spurious brat. This is that sacred fountain which baptizeth all the gentle virtues that so immortalize the names of Cicero, Plutarch, Seneca, and all the old philosophers; herein they are regenerated, and take a new name and nature; dug up in the wilderness of nature, and dipped in this living spring, they are planted and flourish in the paradise of God. By Christianity I intend that universal habit of grace which is wrought in a soul by the regenerating Spirit of God, whereby the whole creature is resigned up into the Divine

will and love, and all its actions directed to the obedience and glory of its Maker. As soon as he had improved his natural understanding with the acquisition of learning, the first studies in which he exercised himself were the principles of religion, and the first knowledge he laboured for was a knowledge of God, which, by a diligent examination of the Scripture and the several doctrines of great men pre-tending that ground, he at length obtained. Afterwards, when he had laid a sure and orthodox foundation in the doctrine of the free grace of God, given us by Jesus Christ, he began to survey the superstructures and to discover much of the hay and stubble of men's inventions in God's worship, which His Spirit burned up in the day of their trial. His faith being established in the truth, he was full of love to God and all his saints. He hated persecution for religion, and was always a champion for all religious people against all their great oppressors. He detested all scoffs at any practice of worship, though such a one as he was not persuaded of. Whatever he practised in religion was neither for faction nor advantage, but contrary to it; and purely, for conscience' sake. As he hated outsides in religion, so could he worse endure those apostacies, and those denials of the Lord, and base compliances of his adversaries, which timorous men practise under the name of prudent and just condescensions to avoid persecution. Christianity being in him as the fountain of all his virtues, and diffusing itself in every stream—that of his prudence falls into the next mention. He from a child was wise, and sought to by many that might have been his fathers for counsel, which he could excellently give to himself and others; and whatever cross event in any of his affairs may give occasion to fools to overlook the wisdom of the design, yet he had as great a foresight, as

strong a judgment, as clear an apprehension of men and things as any man. He had rather a firm impression than a great memory, yet he was forgetful of nothing but injuries. His own integrity made him credulous of other men's, till reason and experience convinced him; and he was as unapt to believe cautions which could not be received without entertaining ill opinions of men; yet he had wisdom enough never to commit himself to a traitor, though he was once wickedly betrayed by friends whom necessity, and not mistake, forced him to trust. He was as ready to hear as to give counsel, and never pertinacious in his will when his reason was convinced. There was no opinion which he was most settled in, either concerning Divine or human things, but he would patiently and impartially hear it debated. In matters of faith his reason always submitted to the Word of God, and what he could not comprehend he would believe because it was written; but in all other things, the greatest names in the world could never lead him without reason: he would deliberate when there was time, but never, by tedious dispute, lost an opportunity of anything that was to be done. He would hear as well as speak, and yet never spoke impertinently or unreasonably. He very well understood his own advantages, natural parts, gifts, and acquirements, yet so as neither to glory of them to others nor over-value himself for them; for he had an excellent virtuous modesty, which shut out all vanity of mind, and yet admitted that true understanding of himself which was requisite for the best improvement of all his talents; he no less understood and was more heedful to remark his defects, imperfections, and disadvantages, but that only to excite his circumspection concerning them, not to damp his spirit in any noble enterprise. He had a noble spirit of government both

in civil, military, and domestic administrations, which forced even from unwilling subjects a love and reverence of him, and endeared him to the souls of those who rejoiced to be governed by him. He had a native majesty that struck an awe of him into the hearts of men, and a sweet greatness that commanded love. He had a clear discerning of men's spirits, and knew how to give everyone their just weight. He contemned none that were not wicked, in whatever low degree of nature or fortune they were otherwise: wherever he saw wisdom, learning, or other virtues in men, he honoured them highly, and admired them to their full rate, but never gave himself blindly up to the conduct of the greatest master. Love itself, which was as powerful in his as in any soul, rather quickened than blinded the eyes of his judgment in discerning the imperfections of those that were most dear to him. His soul ever reigned as king in the internal throne, and never was captive to his sense; religion and reason, its two favoured counsellors, took order that all the passions kept within their own just bounds, did him good service there, and furthered the public weal. He found such felicity in that proportion of wisdom that he enjoyed, as he was a great lover of that which advanced it—learning and the arts, which he not only honoured in others, but had by his industry arrived to be himself a far greater scholar than is absolutely requisite for a gentleman. He had many excellent attainments, but he no less evidenced his wisdom in knowing how to rank and use them, than in gaining them. He had wit enough to have been subtle and cunning, but he so abhorred dissimulation that I cannot say he was either. Greatness of courage would not suffer him to put on a visor, to secure him from any; to retire into the shadow of

privacy and silence was all his prudence could effect in him. It would be as hard to say which was the predominant virtue in him, as which is so in its own nature. He was as excellent in justice as in wisdom; nor could the greatest advantage, or the greatest danger, or the dearest interest or friend in the world, prevail on him, to pervert justice even to an enemy. He never professed the thing he intended not, nor promised what he believed out of his own power, nor failed the performance of anything that was in his power to fulfil. Never fearing anything he could suffer for the truth, he never at any time would refrain a true or give a false witness; he loved truth so much that he hated even sportive lies and gulleries. He was so just to his own honour that he many times forbore things lawful and delightful to him, rather than he would give any one occasion of scandal. Of all lies he most hated hypocrisy in religion; either to comply with changing governments or persons without a real persuasion of conscience, or to practise holy things to get the applause of men or any advantage. As in religion so in friendship; he never professed love when he had it not; nor disguised hate or aversion, which indeed he never had to any party or person, but to their sins: and he loved even his bitterest enemies so well, that I am witness how his soul mourned for them, how heartily he desired their conversion. If he were defective in any part of justice, it was when it was in his power to punish those who had injured him, whom I have so often known him to recompense with favours instead of revenge, that his friends used to tell him, if they had any occasion to make him favourably partial to them, they would provoke him by an injury. He was as faithful and constant to his friends as merciful to his enemies: nothing grieved him more than

to be obliged where he could not hope to return it. He that was a rock to all assaults of might and violence, was the gentlest, easiest soul to kindness, of which the least warm spark melted him into anything that was not sinful; there never was a man more exactly just in the performance of duties to all relations and all persons. Honour, obedience, and love to his father were so natural and so lasting in him, that it is impossible to imagine a better son than he was; and whoever would pray for a blessing in children to any one, could but wish them such a son as he. He never repined at his father's will in anything, how much soever it were to his prejudice, nor would endure to hear any one say his father was not so kind to him as he might have been; but to his dying day preserved his father's memory with such tender affection and reverence as was admirable, and had that high regard for his mother-in-law and the children she brought his father, that he could not have been more dearly concerned in all their interest if she had been his own mother, which, all things considered, although they were deserving persons, was an example of piety and goodness that will not easily be matched. For conjugal affection to his wife it was such in him, as whosoever would draw out a rule of honour, kindness, and religion, to be practised in that estate, need no more but exactly draw out his example; never man had a greater passion for a woman, nor a more honourable esteem of a wife; yet he was not uxorious, nor remitted he that just rule which it was her honour to obey, but managed the reins of government with such prudence and affection that she who would not delight in such an honourable and advantageable subjection, must have wanted a reasonable soul. He governed by persuasion, which he never employed but to things honourable and profitable for herself; he loved

her soul and her honour more than her outside, and yet he had even for her person a constant indulgence, exceeding the common temporary passions of the most uxorious fools. If he esteemed her at a higher rate than she in herself could have deserved, he was the author of that virtue he doated on, while she only reflected his own glories upon him: all that she was was him, while he was here, and all that she is now at best is but his pale shade. So liberal was he to her, and of so generous a temper, that he hated the mention of severed purses; his estate being so much at her disposal, that he never received an account of anything she expended; so constant was he in his love, that when she ceased to be young and lovely he began to show most fondness; he loved her at such a kind and generous rate as words cannot express; yet even this, which was the highest love he or any man could have, was yet bounded by a superior; he loved her in the Lord as his fellow-creature, not his idol, but in such a manner as showed that an affection, bounded in the just rules of duty, far exceeds every way all the irregular passions in the world. He loved God above her and all the other dear pledges of his heart, and at His command, and for His glory, cheerfully resigned them; and was as kind a father, as dear a brother, as good a master, and as faithful a friend as the world had; yet in all these relations the greatest indulgence he could have in the world never prevailed on him to indulge vice in the dearest person; but the more dear any were to him, the more was he offended at anything that might take off the lustre of their glory. As he had great severity against errors and follies pertinaciously pursued, so had he the most merciful, gentle, and compassionate frame of spirit that can be imagined to those who became sensible of their errors and frailties, although they had been ever so

injurious to himself. Nor was his soul less shining in honour than in love. Piety being still the bond of all his other virtues, there was nothing he durst not do or suffer but sin against God; and, therefore, as he never regarded his life in any noble and just enterprise, so he never staked it in any rash or unwarrantable hazard. He was never surprised, amazed, nor confounded with great difficulties or dangers, which rather served to animate than distract his spirits; he had made up his accounts with life and death, and fixed his purpose to entertain both honourably, so that no accident ever dismayed him, but he rather rejoiced in such troublesome conflicts as might signalise his generosity. A truer or more lively valour there never was in any man, but in all his actions it ever marched in the same file with wisdom. He understood well, and as well performed when he undertook it, the military art in all parts of it; he naturally loved the employment, as it suited with his active temper more than any, conceiving a mutual delight in leading those men that loved his conduct; and when he commanded soldiers, never was man more loved and reverenced by all that were under him; for he would never condescend to them in anything they mutinously sought, nor suffer them to seek what it was fit for him to provide, but prevented them by his loving care; and while he exercised his authority no way but in keeping them to their just duty, they joyed as much in his commands as he in their obedience. He was very liberal to them, but ever chose just times and occasions to exercise it. I cannot say whether he were more truly magnanimous or less proud; he never disdained the meanest person, nor flattered the greatest; he had a loving and sweet courtesy to the poorest, and would often employ many spare hours with the commonest soldiers and poorest labourers, but still so

ordering his familiarity as it never raised them to a contempt, but entertained still at the same time a reverence with love of him; he ever preserved himself in his own rank, neither being proud of it so as to despise any inferior, nor letting fall that just decorum which his honour obliged him to keep up. He was as far from envy of superiors as from contemning them that were under him. He was above the ambition of vain titles, and so well contented with the even ground of a gentleman, that no invitation could prevail upon him to advance one step that way. He loved substantial not airy honour. As he was above seeking or delighting in empty titles for himself, so he neither denied nor envied any man's due precedency, but pitied those that took a glory in that which had no foundation of virtue. As little did he seek after popular applause, or pride himself in it, if at any time it cried up his just deserts. He more delighted to do well than to be praised, and never set vulgar commendations at such a rate as to act contrary to his own conscience or reason for obtaining them; nor would he forbear a good action which he was bound to, though all the world disliked it, for he ever looked on things as they were in themselves, not through the dim spectacles of vulgar estimation. As he was far from a vain affectation of popularity, so he never neglected that just care that an honest man ought to have of his reputation, and was as careful to avoid the appearances of evil as evil itself; but if he were evil spoken of for truth or righteousness' sake, he rejoiced in taking up the reproach, which all good men that dare bear their testimony against an evil generation must suffer. Though his zeal for truth and virtue caused the wicked, with the sharp edges of their malicious tongues, to shave off the glories from his head, yet his

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honour, springing from the fast root of virtue, did but grow the thicker and more beautiful for all their endeavours to cut it off. He was as free from avarice as from ambition and pride; never had any man a more contented and thankful heart for the estate that God had given, but it was a very narrow compass for the exercise of his great heart. He loved hospitality as much as he hated riot; he could contentedly be without things beyond his reach, though he took very much pleasure in all those noble delights that exceeded not his faculties. In those things that were of mere pleasure, he loved not to aim at that he could not attain; he would rather wear clothes absolutely plain than pretend to gallantry, and would rather choose to have none than mean jewels or pictures, and such other things as were not of absolute necessity. He would rather give nothing than a base reward or present, and upon that score he lived very much retired, though his nature was very sociable, and delighted in going into and receiving company, because his fortune would not allow him to do it in such a noble manner as suited with his mind. He was so truly magnanimous that prosperity could never lift him up in the least, nor give him any tincture of pride or vain-glory, nor diminish a general affability, courtesy, and civility, that he always showed to all persons. When he was most exalted he was most merciful and compassionate to those that were humbled. At the same time that he vanquished any enemy, he cast away all his illwill to him, and entertained thoughts of love and kindness as soon as he ceased to be in a posture of opposition. He was as far from meanness as from pride, as truly generous as humble, and showed his noble spirit more in adversity than in his prosperous condition. He vanquished all the spite of his enemies by his manly

sufferings, and all the contempts they could cast at him were their shame, not his. His whole life was the rule of temperance in meat, drink, apparel, pleasure, and all those things that may be lawfully enjoyed; and herein his temperance was more excellent than in others, in whom it is not so much a virtue, but proceeds from want of appetite or gust of pleasure; in him it was a true, wise, and religious government of the desire and delight he took in the things he enjoyed. He had a certain activity of spirit which could never endure idleness either in himself or others, and that made him eager, for the time he indulged it, as well in pleasure as in business; indeed, though in youth he exercised innocent sports a little while, yet afterwards his business was his pleasure; but, how intent soever he were in anything, how much soever it delighted him, he could freely and easily cast it away when God called him to something else. He had as much modesty as could consist with a true virtuous assurance, and hated an impudent person. Neither in youth nor in riper age could the most fair or enticing women ever draw him into unnecessary familiarity or vain converse or dalliance with them, yet he despised nothing of the female sex but their follies and vanities; wise and virtuous women he loved, and delighted in all pure, holy, and unblameable conversation with them, but so as never to excite scandal or temptation. Scurrilous discourse even among men he abhorred; and though he sometimes took pleasure in wit and mirth, yet that which was mixed with impurity he never would endure. The heat of his youth a little inclined him to the passion of anger, and the goodness of his nature to those of love and grief, but reason was never dethroned by them, but continued governor and moderator in his soul."

MARGARET DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE.

Margaret, youngest daughter of Sir Charles Lucas, and sister of Lord Lucas of Colchester, was appointed a Maid-of-Honour to Queen Henrietta Maria in the year 1643; and, being with her Royal mistress at Paris, was married there, in 1645, to William Cavendish, Marquis of Newcastle. He was then a widower, living in poverty and exile, but had been the most distinguished general of King Charles I. in the Civil War, raising and maintaining troops with lavish generosity, and fighting rather as an auxiliary to his Sovereign than as a feudatory chief until, after the disastrous rout of Marston Moor, he abandoned the hopeless contest and quitted England. She was a cheerful, clever creature, full of fresh fancies and amusing devices, and proved a most agreeable and useful companion in his impoverished banishment. In the course of sixteen years, which they spent partly at Rotterdam and partly at Antwerp, the Marchioness paid one long visit to her native country, with the intention of obtaining a public grant of money from the Marquis's confiscated estates; but, failing in this design, she brought back subsidies from his family and her own for their maintenance.

Returning to England at the Restoration, the Marquis recovered his estates, and received an acknowledgment of his services and sufferings in a ducal coronet. Having proved her estimable qualities in adversity, the Duke of Newcastle, in prosperity, preferred a retired life and her society to public employments and the pleasures of the Court. With the exception of occasional visits to London, made at long intervals, they spent the remainder of their lives at Welbeck, in Derbyshire. He had himself an inclination for literature; and, besides separate composi-

tions, often amused himself by making contributions to the Duchess's works, and writing eulogistic commentaries upon them. She was not acquainted with the dead languages, nor was she, apparently, well read in modern books; she avowedly cared little for any other compositions than her own and her husband's; and, beginning to write on poetical and philosophical subjects before she was twelve years of age, contrived, by indefatigable diligence, and the employment of many young gentlewomen as scribes, to win the fame of being the most voluminous of all female authors—a fame as yet unrivalled in England or the world.

It is probable that every living writer would concur in the opinion that no paragraph was ever yet so perfectly well expressed in the first writing down but what it might be amended in the second. Waller, her contemporary, enunciated that

> "Faultless writing is the effect of care;
> Our works reformed, and not composed in haste,
> Polished like marble, shall like marble last."

Yet, defying example and precept, common-sense and her own experience, the Duchess made a rule never to revise her works, "lest it should disturb her following conceptions!" She thus quaintly describes her own performances:—"You will find my works like infinite nature, that has neither beginning nor end; and as confused as chaos, wherein is neither method nor order, but all mixed together without separation like evening light and darkness."* Wood states, in his 'Athenæ,' vol. ii. col. 160, that James Bristow, of Caius College, Oxford, "a man of admirable parts," was employed by the Duchess of Newcastle to translate her works into Latin; but he, "finding

* Letter cxxxi.

great difficulty therein, through the confusedness of the subject, gave over, as being a matter not to be well performed by any!"

Her works are—

1. 'The World's Olio.' London, 1655. Folio.

2. 'Nature's Picture drawn by Fancy's Pencil to the Life.' London, 1656. Folio.

3. 'Orations of divers sorts, accommodated to divers places.' London, 1662. Folio.

4. 'Plays.' London, 1662. Folio.

5. 'Philosophical and Physical Opinions.' London, 1663. Folio.

6. 'Philosophical Letters, or Modest Reflections upon some Opinions in Natural Philosophy maintained by several famous and learned Authors of this Age, expressed by way of Letters.' London, 1664. Folio.

7. 'Poems and Fancies.' London, 1664. Folio.

8. 'CCXI. Sociable Letters.' London, 1664. Folio.

9. 'The Life of the thrice noble, high, and puissant Prince William Cavendish, Duke, Marquis, and Earl of Newcastle,' &c. &c. London, 1667. Folio.

10. 'Observations upon Experimental Philosophy.' 2nd edit. London, 1668. Folio.

11. 'Plays never before Printed.' London, 1668. Folio.

Besides these published works, three manuscript volumes of the Duchess's 'Poems' are still extant; and, as if it were deemed necessary that posthumous praise should be on a scale commensurate with her own productions, in the year 1676 a folio volume was published containing 'Letters and Poems in honour of the incomparable Princess Margaret Duchess of Newcastle.' She died in London in 1673, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Park quotes from Reed a pleasing summary of the cha-

racter of this excellent though eccentric woman:—"Her person, it is said, was very graceful; her temper naturally reserved and shy, and she seldom said much in company, especially among strangers; was most indefatigable in her studies, contemplations, and writings; was truly pious, charitable, and generous; was an excellent economist, very kind to her servants, and a perfect pattern of conjugal love and duty."

The Duke survived her three years, and was buried under the same stately tomb.

Granger says there is a portrait of her at Welbeck, by Diepenbeke, and describes two engravings from other paintings: in one, also by Diepenbeke, she is represented "standing in a niche, a term of Mars on her right hand, and another of Apollo on her left;" in the second, again from a portrait by the same painter, she is depicted sitting under a canopy in her study, attended by four Cupids, two of which are placing a wreath of laurel on her head. There is a pleasing engraved portrait of her in Park's edition of Walpole's 'Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors.'

From 'The Pastime and Recreation of the Queen of the Fairies in Fairyland, the centre of the Earth,' is extracted this fanciful picture of

QUEEN MAB.

"Queen Mab and all her company
Dance on a pleasant mole-hill high,
To small straw pipes, wherein great pleasure
They take, and keep just time and measure;
All hand in hand, around, around,
They dance upon the fairy ground;
And when she leaves her dancing-hall,
She doth for her attendants call,
To wait upon her to a bower,
Where she doth sit under a flower,

To shade her from the moonshine bright,
Where gnats do sing for her delight;
The whilst the bat doth fly about,
To keep in order all the rout.
A dewy waving leaf's made fit
For the queen's bath, where she doth sit,
And her white limbs in beauty show,
Like a new fallen flake of snow.
Her maids do put her garments on,
Made of the pure light from the sun,
Which do so many colours take,
As various objects shadows make."

These are just such lines as might almost make themselves in the head of an impressible, imaginative person after reading and delighting in Shakspeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream.'

In another poem, the Duchess, relating the allurements offered to her by personifications of Mirth and Melancholy, gives the unfavourable picture of Melancholy as drawn by Mirth, and the attractive one drawn by Melancholy of herself:—

"Her voice is low, and gives a hollow sound,
She hates the light, and is in darkness found,
Or sits with blinking lamps or tapers small,
Which various shadows make against the wall.
She loves nought else but noise which discord makes,
As croaking frogs, whose dwelling is in lakes,
The raven's hoarse, the mandrake's hollow groan,
And shrieking owls which fly i' the night alone,
The tolling bell, which for the dead rings out,
A mill, where rushing waters run about,
The roaring winds, which shake the cedars tall,
Plough up the seas, and beat the rocks withall;
She loves to walk in the still moonshine night,
And in a thick dark grove she takes delight;
In hollow caves, thatched houses, and low cells,
She loves to live, and there alone she dwells.

2.

"I dwell in groves that gilt are with the sun,
Sit on the bank by which clear waters run,
In summers hot down in a shade I lie;
My music is the buzzing of a fly;
I walk in meadows where grows fresh green grass,
In fields where corn is high, I often pass;

Walk up the hills where round I prospects see,
Some brushy woods, and some all champaigns be;
Returning back, I in fresh pastures go,
To hear how sheep do bleat, and cows do low.
In winter cold, when nipping frosts come on,
Then I do live in a small house alone;
Although 'tis plain, yet cleanly 'tis within,
Like to a soul that's pure and clear from sin;
And there I dwell in quiet and still peace,
Not filled with cares how riches to increase;
I wish nor seek for vain and fruitless pleasures;
No riches are, but what the mind intreasures.
Thus am I solitary, live alone,
Yet better loved the more that I am known;
And though my face, ill-favour'd at first sight,
After acquaintance it will give delight.
Refuse me not, for I shall constant be;
Maintain your credit and your dignity."

The 'Il Penseroso' and 'L'Allegro' of Milton must undoubtedly have haunted the Duchess's memory, stimulating her fancy to imitative rivalry in the above lines; yet they are original and appropriate, and, had their prototypes been lost, would probably have been accounted admirable. "No riches are but what the mind intreasures" is a fine sentiment aptly expressed.

Anne Countess of Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery.

Of this extraordinary personage Dr. Donne averred, "that she well knew how to discourse of all things from predestination to slea silk." Although not a regular authoress, Anne Countess of Pembroke was an eminently learned woman—one who lived and worked, not merely for the good of her own generation, but also for posterity, and her illustrious name is an honour to her sex and country. She was born at Skipton Castle, Craven, on the 30th of January, 1590, and was the only child and heir of George Clifford, third Earl of Cumberland. Her education was very carefully conducted: her preceptor in scholastic lore was Samuel

Daniel, the historian and poet-laureate; and, under her widowed mother's inspection, she was instructed in the arts of housewifery, as well as in all the elegant accomplishments of her day. Bishop Rainbow* says: "She had a clear soul, shining through a vivid body; her body was durable and healthful, her soul sprightful; of great understanding and judgment, faithful memory, and ready wit." She was twice married, first to Richard Sackville Earl of Dorset, Feb. 26, 1609, who died in 1624, leaving her with two surviving children; and again to Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, who died in 1649. She afterwards lived twenty-seven years in widowhood, distinguished by her faithful zeal for the Church of England, magnificent public charities, and private acts of benevolence. The Countess kept a diary, from which her biographers have derived the most interesting particulars of her life. Her habits were simple and inexpensive; and although she built or repaired no less than six castles, which she inhabited by turns, she was "a perfect mistress of forecast and aftercast." She founded two hospitals, repaired seven churches—Brougham, Nine Kirks, Appleby, Bongate, Mallerstang, Barden, and Skipton — and did many other munificent works. On suitable occasions she appeared in all the sumptuous array befitting the owner of three coronets of mounted pearls and strawberry-leaves: her ordinary clothes were homespun and home-made. Four times in every year she gave away good books to her household, permitting each servant to make choice of a volume not possessed before. She kept by her great quantities of things suitable for gifts, and characteristic

* In Wilford's 'Memorials, pp. 90-100, may be found the Sermon preached by Dr. Edward Rainbow, Bishop of Carlisle, at Appleby, on the day of her funeral. It is not only edifying, but also highly curious and entertaining.

of herself and her pursuits, and she liberally bestowed them upon departing guests as memorials of her. She caused her servants to write out choice sentences, which she selected from various authors; and her maids, by her direction, pinned them up about her bed and the hangings of her chamber, so that she might take them as texts to descant upon when dressing, and thus avoid the temptation to encourage gossiping.

Dr. Johnson asserts that the word "literary is not properly used of epistolary missives." If this requires limitation, the letter of the Countess to Sir Joseph Williamson, Secretary of State to King Charles II., who had proposed a candidate to represent one of her boroughs in Parliament, may be accepted as a model of terse and spirited composition:—

"Sir,—I have been bullied by a usurper, I have been neglected by a court, but I will not be dictated to by a subject: your man shall not stand.

"Anne Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery."

The neglect of the Court she probably felt the more keenly from having when a child been petted by Queen Elizabeth. Her tender recollection of persons who had been kind to her is proved by two affecting instances—one being the monument to her tutor, in Beckington church, Somersetshire, on which she placed the following inscription:—

"Here. lies, expecting the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the dead body of Samuel Daniel, Esq., who was tutor to the Lady Anne Clifford in her youth. She was that daughter and heir to George Clifford Earl of Cumberland, who, in gratitude to him, erected this monument in his memory, a long time after, when

she was Countess Dowager of Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery: he died in October, an. 1619."

The other manifests her filial piety:—

"This pillar was erected, anno 1656, by the Right Honourable Anne Countess Dowager of Pembroke, and sole heir of the Right Honourable George Earl of Cumberland, &c., for a memorial of her last parting in this place with her good and pious mother the Right Honourable Margaret Countess Dowager of Cumberland, the second of April, 1616. She also left an annuity of four pounds to be distributed to the poor within this parish of Brougham every second day of April for ever upon this stone table by. Laus Deo."

Bishop Gibson, in his additions to Camden's 'Britannia,' ed. 1772, tracing the course of the old Roman way through Westmorland, says:—"From Hart-horn tree* the way goes directly westward to the Countess's Pillar;" and, after giving the inscription, he adds: "From this pillar the Way carries us to Brougham Castle, and from thence directly to Lowther Bridge, and so over the Eimot into Cumberland."

Hence it appears, that being in the immediate vicinity of her favourite residence, the Countess of Pembroke delighted in blending the memory of her mother with her daily pursuits. Being herself the daughter of an Earl and Countess, this Countess had two daughters by her first husband, the Earl of Dorset; Margaret, who became by marriage Countess of Thanet; and Isabella, who became by marriage Countess of Northampton; and she lived to see numerous grandchildren. She took such particular delight in the Holy Scriptures that she had one of the Gospels read to her in the course of every week; read for

* Where 'Hart a-greese killed Hercules.'

herself several psalms every day; and repeated aloud the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans every Sunday in the year, knowing it by heart from beginning to end. When dying, the last words she uttered were some appropriate verses of that chapter.

At her castle of Brougham the Countess died, March 22, 1675, as her epitaph records, "Christianly, willingly, and quietly." She was interred at Appleby, under a monument which she herself had erected. This lady was in her own right Baroness of Clifford, Westmorland, and Vesey; and surviving her uncle and cousin, who successively inherited her father's Earldom, was the last true-born Clifford of that energetic race, excepting only her cousin's daughter, Elizabeth Countess of Burlington. Granger mentions a whole-length picture of Lady Pembroke at *Apperley** Castle, Cumberland, and a painting in the possession of Mr. Walpole, besides a very scarce engraving, in which she is represented at the age of thirteen. The one in the 'Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors' is doubtless taken from the portrait at Strawberry Hill. The countenance beams with energetic life, and the figure looks full of elasticity.

* Query Appleby.

CHAPTER VI.

1675-1700.

Introductory remarks — Mary Countess of Warwick — Lady Pakington — Lady Fanshawe — Anne Killigrew — Anne Wharton — Lucy Marchioness of Wharton — Aphara Behn — Elizabeth Walker — Lady Gethin — Lady Halket — Retrospective observations and remarks on the true purposes of Biography, and on the abilities and writings of Women.

"In every age, while wits of men
Could judge the good from bad,
Who gat the gift of tongue or pen,
Of world great honour had."

WILLIAM HOLME, 1595.

THE accurate knowledge of dead and living languages, the study of theology and philosophy, history and poetry, were combined in the high-bred matrons and maidens of the Tudor times with practical skill in music, adroitness in spinning silk and flax, excellence in all kinds of needlework and "loops of fingering fine," dexterity in the arts of the apothecary and the minor operations of surgery, aptitude in culinary and cosmetic inventions, and practical ability for domestic management. To their successors of the third generation descended only the manual part of these various and valuable acquisitions—a reaction taking place which reduced the literary knowledge of Englishwomen of the upper classes to bare reading, writing, and the first four rules of arithmetic.

Mr. Hallam has said of the period 1689-1702, "William's

reign, always excepting Dryden, is our *nadir* in works of imagination."*

Addison, writing of his contemporaries, declares that in those days learning was "not thought a proper ingredient in the education of a woman of quality or fortune."

Nevertheless, under every disadvantage and discouragement, there arose gifted women, who brightened their own times, and have left their memories to posterity.

Mary Countess of Warwick.

Mary, daughter of Richard Boyle, first Earl of Cork, and wife of Charles Rich, Earl of Warwick, died April 12, 1678. To her, George, first Earl Berkeley, dedicated his 'Historical Applications,' avowing that she had "a sovereign power over him, and was pleased to encourage him to write religious meditations;" and to him the Countess of Warwick addressed a letter full of excellent advice, in which, with great felicity of phrase, she especially recommends "the gaiety of goodness." Her claim to a place among literary women rests chiefly upon her 'Occasional Meditations upon sundry subjects, with pious Reflections upon several subjects, by the Right Hon. Mary, late Countess Dowager of Warwick.' London, 1678. It appears to have been her ambition to use her moderate abilities for the promotion of good morals and piety.

An engraved likeness of her is prefixed to the funeral sermon preached at Felsted, in Essex, by Dr. Walker, rector of Fyfield, in which her noble and beneficent character is highly praised.

Lady Pakington.

Dorothy, daughter of Thomas Lord Coventry, the Lord Keeper, married Sir John Pakington, Bart., of Westwood.

* 'Lit. of Eur.,' ed. iv., vol. iii., p. 489.

She led a retired life, and devoted herself to learning, piety, and good works. She was the author of several religious books—'The Gentleman's Calling,' 'The Lady's Calling,' 'The Government of the Tongue,' 'The Christian's Birthright,' and 'The Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety;' and she was for many years reputed to be the author of 'The Whole Duty of Man.'

She enjoyed the esteem and friendship of the most eminent divines of her time, and, in the days of their deprivation and need, rendered them the most substantial services. The excellent Dr. Hammond found a home in her hospitable house during several years, and was at last buried in the chapel of the Pakingtons at Hampton Lovett, Worcestershire. Lady Pakington died May 10, 1679, in a good old age.

Lady Fanshawe.

Anne, eldest daughter of Sir John Harrison and Margaret Fanshawe his wife, was born in London, March 25, 1625. Her mother took great pains with her education, directing her attention more especially to domestic usefulness, and, dying when Anne was only fifteen years of age, left her capable of managing her father's household with discretion and economy. At nineteen years of age Anne Harrison married her cousin, Richard Fanshawe. The following year, 1635, she accompanied him to Spain, where he became Secretary to the British Embassy. Returning to England in 1641, her husband exerted himself strenuously in the cause of King Charles I. Being taken prisoner at the battle of Worcester, he was for a time closely confined; and his wife, not being permitted to visit him, exposed herself to great hardships in order to alleviate his painful solitude by standing to converse with him

outside his window in the dead of night and in bad weather. On his release they withdrew to Tankersley Park, in Yorkshire, where he occupied himself with poetry and polite literature, and his wife entered with delight into all his pursuits. In 1656 they went to Breda, where he was knighted by King Charles II.

At the Restoration, Sir Richard was made Master of Requests, and sent to Portugal to negotiate the marriage of the King with the Princess Catherine. In 1664, he was sent as British Ambassador to Spain, whither his wife accompanied him. Sir Richard translated into English the 'Pastor Fido' of Guarini, from the Italian, and the 'Lusiad' of Camoens, from the Portuguese. His letters written during his embassies were printed after his death, which took place suddenly in 1666, to the extreme grief of his devoted wife.

In the first anguish of this dreadful bereavement she was exposed to such distressing poverty that she long wanted pecuniary means to convey his remains to the tomb of his fathers, and to maintain her orphan children. Sir Richard's salary was in arrear, and no remittances could be obtained from the Ministers of the profligate King, who wasted the public money in vice, instead of paying his faithful servants and compensating the losses of his suffering adherents.

The Queen of Spain offered Lady Fanshawe and her five children a handsome provision, on condition of their conforming to the Roman Catholic Church, but the pious widow withstood the temptation, even while the embalmed corpse of her beloved husband lay daily in her sight. Means were furnished at last by the Queen Dowager of Spain; the removal to England was effected, and Sir Richard's remains were interred within the chapel of St. Mary in the church of Ware.

Lady Fanshawe survived him fourteen years, devoting her widowhood to the education of her children, to acts of benevolence, and to self-improvement. She died in January, 1680.

The 'Memoir' which she wrote of herself is her best and most durable monument; a likeness is prefixed to it.

The following extract shows her character as well as her husband's:—

"And now I thought myself a perfect queen, and my husband so glorious a crown that I more valued myself to be called by his name than if I had been a princess; for I knew him very wise and very good, and that his soul doted on me; upon which confidence I will tell you what happened. My Lady Rivers, a brave woman, and one that had suffered many thousand pounds loss for the King, for whom I had a great reverence, and she a kinswoman's kindness for me, in discourse tacitly commended the knowledge of State affairs; she mentioned several women who were very happy in a good understanding thereof, and said none of them was originally more capable than I. She said a post would arrive from Paris from the Queen that night, and she should extremely like to know what news it brought—adding, if I would ask my husband privately, he would tell me what he found in the packet, and I might tell her. I, that was young and innocent, and to that day had never in my mouth 'What news?' now began to think there was more in inquiry into public affairs than I had thought of; and that, being a fashionable thing, it would make me more beloved of my husband than I already was, if that had been possible. When my husband returned home from the council, after receiving my welcome, he went with his hands full of papers into his study. I followed him; he turned hastily, and

said, 'What wouldst thou have, my life?' I told him I heard the Prince had received a packet from the Queen, and I guessed he had it in his hand, and I desired to know what was in it. He smilingly replied, 'My love, I will immediately come to thee; pray thee go, for I am very busy.' When he came out of his closet I renewed my suit; he kissed me, and talked of other things. At supper I would eat nothing; he as usual sat by me, and drank often to me, which was his custom, and was full of discourse to company that was at table. Going to bed I asked him again, and said I could never believe he loved me, if he refused to tell me all he knew. He answered nothing, but stopped my mouth with kisses. I cried, and he went to sleep. Next morning very early, as his custom was, he called to rise, but began to discourse with me first, to which I made no reply; he rose, came on the other side of the bed, kissed me, drew the curtains softly, and went to court. When he came home to dinner, he presently came to me as was usual, and when I had him by the hand, I said, 'Thou dost not care to see me troubled;' to which he, taking me in his arms, answered: 'My dearest soul, nothing on earth can afflict me like that; when you asked me of my business it was wholly out of my power to satisfy thee: my life, my fortune, shall be thine, and every thought of my heart in which the trust I am in may not be revealed; but my honour is my own, which I cannot preserve if I communicate the Prince's affairs. I pray thee with this answer rest satisfied.' So great was his reason and goodness that, upon consideration, it made my folly appear to me so vile that, from that day until the day of his death, I never thought fit to ask him any business, except what he communicated freely to me in order to his estate or family."

Anne Killigrew.

Anne, daughter of Dr. Henry Killigrew, Master of the Savoy, received a learned education, and excelled in painting. She was a Maid-of-Honour to the Duchess of York, and died in 1685, of the small-pox, being not quite twenty-five years of age. She was buried in St. John's Chapel, in the Savoy. She painted her own portrait, imitating the style of Sir Peter Lely. Granger describes three engravings from it; one by Blooteling, one by Becket, and one by Chambers, copied from Becket's, and inserted by Walpole in his 'Anecdotes of Painting.' Her 'Poems,' together with Dryden's ode on her decease, were published in 1686. From the one 'Upon the Saying that my Verses were made by Another,' Ballard has extracted the following lines in praise of Catherine Philips:—

"Orinda (Albion's and her sex's grace)
Owed not her glory to a beauteous face,
It was her radiant soul, that shone within,
Which struck a lustre through her outward skin,
That did her lips and cheeks with roses dye,
Advanced her height, and sparkled in her eye;
Nor did her sex at all obstruct her fame,
But higher 'mong the stars it fixed her name;
What she did write, not only all allowed,
But every laurel to her laurel bowed."

These lines are rather below, than above mediocrity; yet the woman who was capable of calling forth the following stanzas must, in some measure, be worthy of the earthly immortality which they bestow:—

An Ode, by John Dryden,

To the pious memory of the accomplished young lady Mrs. Anne Killigrew, excellent in the two sister-arts of Poesy and Painting.

I.

"Thou youngest virgin-daughter of the skies,
Made in the last promotion of the blessed;
Whose palms, new pluck'd from paradise,
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,

Rich with immortal green above the rest;
Whether adopted to some neighb'ring star,
Thou roll'st above us in thy wand'ring race,
Or, in procession fix'd and regular,
Mov'd with the heav'n's majestic pace;
Or, called to more superiour bliss,
Thou tread'st with seraphims the vast abyss.
Whatever happy region is thy place,
Cease thy celestial song a little space;
Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,
Since heav'n's eternal year is thine:
Hear, then, a mortal muse thy praise rehearse
In no ignoble verse;
But such as thine own voice did practise here,
When thy first fruits of poesy were giv'n
To make thyself a welcome inmate there;
While yet a young probationer,
And candidate of heav'n.

II.

If by traduction came thy mind,
Our wonder is the less to find
A soul so charming from a stock so good;
Thy father was transfus'd into thy blood;
So wert thou born into a tuneful strain,
An early rich and inexhausted vein.
But if thy pre-existing soul
Was formed at first with myriads more,
It did thro' all the mighty poets roll,
Who Greek or Latin laurels wore,
And was that Sappho last which once it was before.
If so, then cease thy flight, O heav'n-born mind!
Thou hast no dross to purge from thy rich ore,
Nor can thy soul a fairer mansion find
Than was the beauteous frame she left behind:
Return to fill or mend the choir of thy celestial kind.

III.

May we presume to say that at thy birth
New joy was sprung in heav'n as well as here on earth?
For sure the milder planets did combine
On thy auspicious horoscope to shine,
And e'en the most malicious were in trine.
Thy brother angels at thy birth
Strung each his lyre, and tun'd it high,
That all the people of the sky
Might know a poetess was born on earth;
And then if ever mortal ears
Had heard the music of the spheres,

And if no clus'tring swarm of bees
On thy sweet mouth distill'd their golden dew,
'T was that such vulgar miracles
Heav'n had not leisure to renew;
For all thy bless'd fraternity of love
Solemniz'd there thy birth, and kept thy holyday above.

IV.

Oh gracious God! how far have we
Profan'd thy heav'nly gift of poesy?
Made prostitute and profligate the muse,
Debas'd to each obscene and impious use,
Whose harmony was first ordain'd above
For tongues of angels and for hymns of love?
Oh wretched we! why were we hurried down,
This lubrique and adult'rate age
(Nay, added fat pollutions of our own)
T' increase the steaming ordures of the stage?
What can we say t' excuse our second fall?
Let this thy vestal, heav'n! atone for all;
Her Arethusian streams remain unsoil'd,
Unmix'd with foreign filth, and undefil'd;
Her wit was more than man, her innocence a child.

V.

Art she had none, yet wanted none,
For nature did that want supply;
So rich in treasures of her own,
She might our boasted stores defy:
Such noble vigour did her verse adorn,
That it seem'd borrow'd where 't was only born.
Her morals too were in her bosom bred,
By great examples daily fed,
What in the best of books, her father's life, she read.
And to be read herself she need not fear;
Each test, and ev'ry light, her muse will bear,
Tho' Epictetus with his lamp were there.
E'en love, for love sometimes her muse exprest,
Was but a lambent flame which play'd about her breast,
Light as the vapours of a morning dream;
So cold herself, while she such warmth exprest,
'Twas Cupid bathing in Diana's stream.

VI.

Born to the spacious empire of the Nine,
One would have thought she should have been content
To manage well that mighty government;
But what can young ambitious souls confine?
To the next realm she stretch'd her sway,
For painture near adjoining lay,
A plenteous province and alluring prey.

A Chamber of Dependencies was fram'd,
(As conquerors will never want pretence,
When arm'd, to justify the offence)
And the whole fief, in right of poetry, she claimed.
The country open lay without defence,
For poets frequent inroads there had made,
And perfectly could represent
The shape, the face, with ev'ry lineament,
And all the large domains which the dumb sister swayed,
All bow'd beneath her government.
Receiv'd in triumph wheresoe'er she went,
Her pencil drew whate'er her soul design'd,
And oft' the happy draught surpassed the image in her mind.
The sylvan scenes of herds and flocks,
And fruitful plains and barren rocks,
Of shallow brooks that flow'd so clear,
The bottom did the top appear;
Of deeper too and ampler floods,
Which, as in mirrors, shew'd the woods;
Of lofty trees, with sacred shades,
And perspectives of pleasant glades,
Where nymphs of brightest form appear,
And shaggy Satyrs standing near,
Which them at once admire and fear.
The ruins too of some majestic piece,
Boasting the pow'r of ancient Rome or Greece,
Whose statues, friezes, columns, broken lie,
And, tho' defaced, the wonder of the eye;
What nature, art, bold fiction, e'er durst frame,
Her forming hand gave feature to the name.
So strange a concourse ne'er was seen before,
But when the peopled ark the whole creation bore.

VII.

The scene then changed, with bold erected look
Our martial king the fight with rev'rence strook;
For, not content t' express his outward part,
Her hand called out the image of his heart:
His warlike mind, his soul devoid of fear,
His high-designing thoughts were figured there,
As when by magic ghosts are made appear.
Our Phœnix queen was pourtrayed too so bright,
Beauty alone could beauty take so right:
Her dress, her shape, her matchless grace,
Were all observ'd, as well as heav'nly face.
With such a peerless majesty she stands,
As in that day she took the crown from sacred hands;
Before a train of heroines was seen
In beauty foremost as in rank the queen.

Thus nothing to her genius was deny'd,
But like a ball of fire, the further thrown,
Still with a greater blaze she shone,
And her bright soul broke out on ev'ry side.
What next she had design'd heav'n only knows:
To such immod'rate growth her conquest rose,
That fate alone its progress could oppose.

VIII.

Now all those charms, that blooming grace,
The well-proportion'd shape and beauteous face,
Shall never more be seen by mortal eyes;
In earth the much-lamented virgin lies.
Not wit nor piety could fate prevent;
Nor was the cruel destiny content
To finish all the murder at a blow,
To sweep at once her life and beauty too;
But, like a hardened felon, took a pride
To work more mischievously slow,
And plunder'd first, and then destroy'd.
A double sacrilege on things divine,
To rob the relic and deface the shrine!
But thus Orinda died;
Heav'n by the same disease did both translate:
As equal were their souls, so equal was their fate.

IX.

Meantime her warlike brother on the seas
His waving streamers to the winds displays,
And vows for his return, with vain devotion, pays.
Ah, gen'rous youth! that wish forbear,
The winds too soon will waft thee here:
Slack all thy sails, and fear to come,
Alas! thou know'st not thou art wreck'd at home!
No more shalt thou behold thy sister's face,
Thou hast already had her last embrace.
But look aloft, and if thou kenn'st from far,
Among the Pleiads a new-kindled star,
If any sparkles than the rest more bright,
'T is she that shines in that propitious light.

X.

When in mid-air the golden trump shall sound,
To raise the nations under ground;
When in the valley of Jehoshaphat,
The judging God shall close the book of fate,
And there the last assizes keep
For those who wake and those who sleep;
When rattling bones together fly
From the four corners of the sky;

When sinews o'er the skeletons are spread,
Those cloth'd with flesh, and life inspires the dead:
The sacred poets first shall hear the sound,
And foremost from the tomb shall bound,
For they are covered with the lightest ground;
And straight, with inborn vigour, on the wing,
Like mounting larks to the new morning sing:
There thou, sweet saint! before the quire shalt go,
As harbinger of heav'n, the way to show,
The way which thou so well hast learnt below."

Mrs. Wharton.

Anne, daughter of Sir Henry Lee, of Ditchley, Oxfordshire, and a coheir of his estate, was the first wife of Thomas Wharton, Esq., afterwards Marquis of Wharton. Some of her letters to Bishop Burnet have been printed, and twelve of the Bishop's to her. She was a woman of elegant tastes and many accomplishments. Her poetical productions were numerous, consisting chiefly of paraphrases on passages of Scripture, and occasional verses suggested by passing events. She translated from Ovid the 'Epistle of Penelope to Ulysses,' incited, probably, by her own separation from a beloved husband, while she sojourned in the south of Europe, in declining health. She returned home only to die, expired at Adderbury, October 29, 1685, and was buried at Winchinden. Several of her poems are reprinted in the 'Select Collection' of J. Nichols, 1780. The amatory verses are not free from the coarseness of the times; the paraphrases are made in a grave and reverent style, and show considerable powers of versification. The following lines afford a fair specimen of her productions:—

On the Snuff of a Candle. Made in Sickness.

"See there the taper's dim and doleful light,
In gloomy waves silently rolls about,
And represents to my dim, weary sight,
My light of life, almost as near burnt out.

Ah, health! best part and substance of our joy,
(For without thee 'tis nothing but a shade),
Why dost thou partially thyself employ,
Whilst thy proud foes as partially invade?
What we who ne'er enjoy so fondly seek,
Those who possess thee still almost despise;
To gain immortal glory, raise the weak,
Taught by their former want thy worth to prize.
Dear melancholy muse, my constant guide,
Charm this coy health back to my fainting heart,
Or I'll accuse thee of vain-glorious pride,
And swear thou dost but feign the moving art.
But why do I upbraid thee, gentle muse?
Who for all sorrows mak'st me some amends,
Alas! our sickly minds sometimes abuse
Our best physicians and our dearest friends."

Mr. Noble mentions an engraving of Mrs. Wharton in the Houghton Collection, from a portrait by Lely.

Lucy Marchioness of Wharton.

Lucia, or Lucy, daughter of Adam Loftus, Viscount Lisburne, was the second wife of Thomas, Marquis of Wharton, and mother of Philip, Duke of Wharton. The Ely pedigree, given by Burke, does not furnish the dates of her birth, marriage, or death. The 'English Cyclopædia' mentions that she died in 1716. Mr. Noble notices an engraving of her from a portrait by Lely. Three stanzas of four lines each, addressed 'To Cupid,' first published with the poems of her son, and reprinted by Nichols, vol. v., pp. 10, 11, in 1782, have sufficed to obtain for her a literary reputation.

Merely to show how easily in those days a woman of rank and fashion could acquire the world's praise, these paltry verses are inserted here:—

To Cupid.

"Spite of thy godhead, powerful love,
I will my torments hide;
For what avails, if life must prove
A sacrifice to pride?

Pride, thou'rt become my goddess now,
To thee I'll altars rear;
To thee each morning pay my vow,
And offer every tear.
But, oh! should my Philander's frown
Once take your injured part,
I soon should cast that idol down,
And offer him my heart."

APHARA BEHN.

Descended from respectable ancestors in the city of Canterbury, the father of Aphara Behn, whose name was Johnson, obtained through his kinsman, Lord Willoughby, the appointment of Governor of Surinam and of the thirty-six West Indian Islands, and embarked with his family for that colony when Aphara was very young. General Johnson died upon the outward passage, but his widow and family arrived in safety, and took up their residence in Surinam. Aphara became acquainted there with the African Prince Oroonoko, whose extraordinary story she related in a novel, once celebrated, but now only recollected as having furnished the incidents of that remarkable tragedy by Southerne, in which the slave-trade was for the first time denounced by an English writer. After having spent some years in South America, Aphara returned to England, and married Mr. Behn, an eminent merchant of London. King Charles II. delighted much in her animated conversation, and in the accounts she gave of the wonders of Surinam, and he employed her as a political spy, and sent her in that capacity to Antwerp. On her passage back to England, being driven upon the coast for several days by a violent tempest, she narrowly escaped perishing by shipwreck. Aphara Behn led a gay, perhaps a licentious life, and after a long illness died, April 16, 1689, and was buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey. She translated into English the 'Reflections and Maxims'

of Francis, Duc de la Rochefoucault, and Fontenelle's 'History of Oracles' and 'Plurality of Worlds.' She wrote the paraphrase of 'Ænon's Epistle to Paris,' in Dryden's 'Ovid,' a great many verses and letters, several histories and novels, and seventeen successful plays.

According to Machiavelli, the secret of success lies in the capability of adaptation to the times. The licentious indelicacy of Aphara Behn's lively writings insured them a favourable reception, both upon the public stage and in the private dwellings of that fashionable world which had Charles II. for its luminary. Robert Chambers aptly terms Aphara Behn "a female Wycherley." Her name would have been excluded from all mention in these pages, had it not been necessary to mark the true state of female literature at this period.

Aphara Behn is the first English authoress upon record whose life was openly wrong, and whose writings were obscene.

In all ages when morality prevailed, the favourite narrative and dramatic fictions represented the heroes either as virtuous characters or as deservedly punished for evil deeds. Base, indeed, had the condition of society become when the heroes of the English stage and of the fashionable novels were attractively displayed as triumphant libertines.

A complete list of her published works is given in the first volume of the 'Biographia Britannica,' pp. 667-8, notes F, G, and H.

An engraving of her, by White, and a copy from it by Cole, are mentioned by Granger, who says nothing of a painted portrait.

Elizabeth Walker.

Elizabeth, eldest daughter of John Sadler, citizen and grocer of London, was born in Bucklersbury, July 12,

1623. In 1650, she married Anthony Walker, D.D., and, after forty years of domestic happiness, died February 23, 1690. Mrs. Walker left behind her a manuscript volume of 'Instructions' for her daughters, and 'Memorials of God's good Providence, towards herself and family;' copious extracts from which were engrafted in the 'Biography' of her life subsequently published by her husband.

Lady Gethin.

Grace, daughter of Sir George Norton, of Abbot's Leigh, in the county of Somerset, was born in 1676. She was very carefully educated, and showed great aptness for the acquisition of valuable knowledge. She was married early to Sir Richard Gethin, Bart., of Gethin's Grot, in Ireland; died October 11, 1697, in the twenty-first year of her age, and was buried at Hollingbourn, in Kent.* A monument, with her effigy, was erected in Westminster Abbey; and, further to perpetuate her memory, her parents provided that a sermon should be preached there yearly on Ash Wednesday, for ever. The contents of her commonplace books and other papers were published after her death, under the title of 'Reliquiæ Gethinianæ.' Ballard gives extracts, which he trustingly supposes to be original; they are, however, the undoubted property of Lord Bacon and of some other authors; and the sole merit of the work would appear, from the table of contents, to consist in judicious selection.

Ballard's praise of Lady Gethin's character rests upon a surer basis than his estimate of her literary works. He says, "She soon discerned that true Christian virtue is the most desirable attainment of which we are capable, and that the best use that can be made of a superior under-

* Noble's Continuation of Granger, vol. i., p. 281.

standing is to enable us to acquire further degrees of real goodness." An engraving from Dickson's portrait of her is prefixed to the 'Reliquiæ Gethinianæ.'

Lady Halket.

Anne, daughter of Mr. Robert Murray, preceptor to Prince Charles, was born in London, January 4, 1622. She was carefully educated, and excelled in divinity, physic, and surgery. In 1656, she married Sir John Halket, and, after an exemplary and useful life, she died in 1699. Twenty-one volumes of 'Religious Meditations' are attributed to her, but probably most of them were mere transcripts; for the tabular view of the contents of the Eighth Book, as copied by Ballard from the catalogue subjoined to the published account of her life, accords precisely with the Week's directions of Vices to be opposed, and Virtues to be practised, in Bishop Jeremy Taylor's 'Guide to Devotion,' Part I. of his 'Golden Grove.'

Taking a retrospective view of the preceding pages, it may confidently be affirmed that the well-educated possessors of the finest natural abilities were, with few exceptions, exemplary in the discharge of practical duties, and lived in true piety to God. It may also be remarked that the greater number of those literary Englishwomen were married, and many of them more than once; from whence it would appear that their mental pursuits had not weakened their domestic affections. The followers in their track will be found to add instances in further confirmation of these statements. In all biographies, the main things to be considered, both by writers and readers, are, the training-ground of character, the arena of life's struggle, and the subsequent results. In the present work, the literary

results are the more especial objects of attention; but, even in their just estimate, the moral and religious effects of such preparatory discipline must be included, for earnestness of intention and elevation of aim give vigorous health and strength to intellect.

In the foregoing chapters mention has been made of the principal English authoresses who died before the year 1700. Henceforth the more varied products of the fertile and widening fields of literature will render it necessary that the increasing numbers of its female cultivators should be divided and classified. From this period more abundant materials are also supplied to the biographer, and better opportunities afforded of discriminating and fixing the lights and shades of individual character, and of comparing and contrasting the mental productions of women of genius. Each generation, like every floral season, may be said to have a prevalent colour of its own; but, as the same dye produces different tints upon textures of silk, wool, and cotton, so variously does the secular influence of opinion affect and tincture human minds.

Approaching more nearly to our own times, we are enabled more readily to realize the habits of life and of thought and feeling, which belong to our more immediate predecessors, and, connecting their literary utterances with their personal experience, to yield up our sympathies, and lay our hearts and understandings open to their teachings; for teach they do, whether intentionally or not, both by the example of their actions and the register of their opinions.

Verse constitutes the earliest literature of all nations, and through all ages it embodies the highest. The writings of women, as compared with those of men, are but as the satellite to the planet, imparting little light and deriving much; nevertheless, they have their own

peculiar utility, and their own soft glory. Intuitive fineness of perception, rapidity of apprehension, tenderness, delicacy, and a certain persuasive sweetness, are general attributes of women; and these qualities, conjoined with a sound understanding, high imaginative faculties, and an enlightened conscience, finding graceful and harmonious expression, breathe genial, refreshing, and holy influences upon many a careworn heart.

While intermingled with the productions of manly intellects, in the general growth of a nation's literature, women's writings and their elegant characteristics lie overshadowed and unremarked; mere speedwells and eyebright in a forest of stately trees, requiring separate consideration and comparison among themselves. This consideration and this comparison it is a principal object of the present work to afford; not under the fallacious impression that pretty herbs can rival giant oaks and lofty pines in fitness for shipbuilding, but simply taking them for what they are, and pointing out their real use and value.

It may here be not inappositely remarked that, up to the termination of the seventeenth century, no Englishwoman had surpassed Margaret Roper in scholastic attainments, Mary Sydney, Countess of Pembroke in poetry, and Lucy Hutchinson in prose. They stand as tide-marks, by which the subsequent rise and fall of feminine abilities may be ascertained.

Warton has treated the history of English poetry and of English literature as identical; and such in the early periods of all languages will their poetry and literature be found; the former representing at once the most excellent form and the most essential qualities of the latter, in which it is comprised. But after long ages of cultivation, learning, social knowledge, and scientific researches divide

the republic of letters into many separate states or regions, marked by distinct diversities of nature and aspect. Among them poetry is accounted merely as one; which, although inherently superior to the rest, yet being degraded by the occasional inferiority of its cultivators, submits sometimes to successful, and almost triumphant rivalry.

To the poetesses of England the remainder of this volume will be exclusively appropriated, their respective prose writings being included in the review of their productions; the appellation of poetesses being limited to those in whom the faculty of composition in verse obviously forms either the highest original exercise of their minds, or possesses the genuine characteristics of true poetry.

CHAPTER VII.

The Poetesses.

A Dissertation upon Poetry—its nature and uses.

"Not empire to the rising sun,
By valour, conduct, fortune won;
Not highest wisdom in debates,
For framing laws to govern states;
Not skill in sciences profound,
So large to grasp the circle round;
Such heavenly influence require
As how to strike the Muses' lyre."

Dean Swift's 'Rhapsody on Poetry.'

Although the ancient Greeks attributed to the Muses not only the suggestive impulses of poetry and rhetoric, but those of almost all the fine and liberal arts, yet their bards describe the most distinguishing and precious prerogatives of the golden-sandalled daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne as consisting in the inspiration of heart-ennobling and melodious verse.

Hesiod, in his 'Theogony,' exhibits them first in the performance of their highest functions, singing choral hymns to their heavenly Father, and to the subordinate "givers of blessings," and then as exemplifying celestial government and control over the heroic actions of men, while by such strains—

"To evils, they
Yield an oblivious balm; to torturing cares,
Rest."

He records that the Muses dwell "in beautified abodes,"

that the Graces have their mansions near, and that those earthly beings are blessed whom they love. He seems, while bending over his laurel-bough, to have imputed every grace of movement, and every harmony of sound, in nature and in art, to their influence; while—

> "Rejoicing in their beauteous voice and song
> Unperishing, far round the dusky earth
> Rings with their hymning voices, and beneath
> Their many rustling feet a pleasant sound
> Ariseth, as they take their onward way
> To their own father's presence."*

The fragment of Sappho, which begins—

> "Ye muses, ever fair and young,"†

and lines from many other Greek poets, might here be adduced to prove that those enthroned bards were so well aware of a truth enunciated by Wordsworth, that his words, instead of being prompted by original reflection, might pass for a plain inference drawn from their works—"Fancy is given to quicken and to beguile the temporal part of our nature, Imagination to incite and to support the eternal."‡

The natural delight of human beings in acquiring knowledge, and in drawing inferences from the contemplation of objects of sense, is considered by Aristotle as suggesting the origin of all the imitative arts, and as combining with the spontaneous pleasure taken in rhythm and melodious sound to arouse into action the poetic faculty. His treatise on 'The Poetic' does not explain its essence, but merely defines the proprieties of its principal forms. The Ancient British bards, without defining poetry, gave many admirable precepts for its regulation. One Triad declares: "Three things should all poetry be—thoroughly erudite, thoroughly animated, and thoroughly natural.'

* Elton's Translation. † Fawkes's Translation.
‡ Preface to the first volume of his Works, editions 1815 and 1840.

The dissertation of Imlac, in the 10th chapter of Dr. Johnson's 'Rasselas,' is an admirable, though an unintentional commentary upon the injunction that all poetry should be "thoroughly erudite." That it should likewise be "thoroughly animated," full of heart, and soul, and spirit; and "thoroughly natural," — simple, unaffected, unconstrained, and always true to nature and to human feeling—were facts which that eminent critic, trammelled as he was by the artificial system of his age, failed to recognise in theory, although he sometimes practically evinced a just sense of their force.

Among English scholars, at the period of the revival of classical literature, to translate euphonically must have been deemed a skilful feat; and consequently the spirit and the matter of Greek poetry excited comparatively less attention than its rhythm. Under this impression, Puttenham defined poetry to be "a skill to speak and write harmonically;" and verse to be "a kind of musical utterance, by reason of a certain congruity of sounds pleasing to the ear." Hence it would appear that he thought them identical, and did not recognise what the Welsh bards call the *Awen*, or poetic inspiration. It was the mere voice and rhythm which he noticed, not "those ultimate secretions," as Sir James Stephen terms them, "of the deepest thoughts and the purest feelings, in which the essence of poetry consists."*

Craik says, "Passion expressing itself in verse, is what is properly called poetry."†

This definition is too narrow. Verse vivified by passion is undoubtedly poetry: but there are kinds of poetry in which passion is not a necessary element.

The most eloquent of women, writing under German

* Essays in 'Ecclesiastical Biography,' vol. ii., p 59.

† 'Sketches of the History of Literature and Learning in England,' vol. iii., p. 161.

influences, with the impulsive felicity of French utterance, declares:—"Il est difficile de dire ce qui n'est pas de la poésie; mais, si l'on veut comprendre ce qu'elle est, il faut appeler à son secours les impressions qu' excitent une belle contrée, une musique harmonieuse, le régard d'un objet chéri, et par-dessus tout, un sentiment religieux qui nous fait éprouver en nous-mêmes la présence de la Divinité." * —It is difficult to say what is not poetry; but if any one desires to comprehend what it is, it will be necessary for him to call to his aid the impressions excited by a beautiful country, harmonious music, the sight of a beloved object, and, above all, that religious sentiment which makes us inwardly conscious of the presence of God.

The soul of every poet must re-echo these sentiments: therefore, if Mr. Craik uses the word "passion" as a synonym of "enlivened imagination," his definition may be accepted; though Dr. Blair gives a closer approximation to the indefinable truth, when stating it to be "the language of passion, or of enlivened imagination, formed most commonly into regular numbers." While cavilling thus at the mere words of Professor Craik's definition, it is, however, cordially acknowledged that the criticisms interspersed through his 'Sketches' sufficiently attest his wide, warm sense of every form of real poetry.

Poetry essentially consists of fine thoughts and melodious utterance; and its mundane materials are—the appearances of nature, the records of history, the events of life, and the internal experience of the soul.

Bishop Lowth, in his Introductory Lecture on the 'Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews,' remarks, that "However ages and nations may have differed in their religious sentiments and opinions, in this, at least, we find them all

* Madame de Staël, 'L'Allemagne,' vol. i., 2de partie, chap. x.

agreed that the mysteries of their devotion were celebrated in verse." He adds:—"Of this origin poetry even yet exhibits no obscure indications, since she ever embraces a divine and sacred subject with a kind of filial tenderness and affection. To the sacred haunts of religion, she delights to resort as to her native soil; and there she most willingly inhabits, and there she flourishes in all her pristine beauty and vigour."*

To the Lectures above quoted, and to Dean Milman's 'History of the Jews,' the reader is referred for some admirable remarks upon the magnificent poems of Deborah, Miriam, and other inspired women of Israel.

Poetry has been divided into Pastoral, Lyric, Didactic, Descriptive, Epic, and Dramatic; and still more simply and justly into Narrative, Dramatic, and Allegorical; or Narrative, Dramatic, and Lyric.

After having analyzed the nature of Narrative and Dramatic Poetry, and eulogized their merits, Lord Bacon says:—"But Allegorical Poetry excels the others, and appears a solemn, sacred thing, which religion itself generally makes use of to preserve an intercourse between divine and human things."†

He alludes to the fables of heathen mythology as sounding "like a soft whisper from the traditions of more ancient nations, conveyed through the flutes of the Grecians."

Dr. Latham has carefully examined the gradual formation of the English language, and written a treatise which may be said to contain its geology. Thomas Warton has widely and diligently explored, as it were, the oceanic exhalations, wafted showers, and mountain springs of English literature. Percy, Ellis, Ritson, and others, have

* Gregory's Translation.

† 'Advancement of Learning,' book ii.

acted as pioneers to a host of succeeding inquirers, examiners, and critics.

> "Taste, like the silent dial's power,
> To which supernal light is given
> To measure inspiration's hour,
> And tell its height in heaven."

belonged to Thomas Campbell, who, in his admirable Essay, has traced English poetry from obscure and various sources through successive ages, just as he would have followed the brooks and rivulets which steal, ripple, and rush through his native region, and, flowing downward, form together a great navigable river. In making this survey he pauses to admire the peculiar beauty of each fount and tributary stream, the sinuosities of its course, the tincture of its soil, the flowers of its banks, the forms and hues of earth and sky reflected on its surface, and rises into rapture as he contemplates the glory of the augmenting waters rolling their flood onward to futurity.

Yet, while observant of the stream and its tutelaries, he overlooks the Naiades. Among the one hundred and seventy "British Poets" whom he notices, there is only one woman, Catherine Philips.

Dr. Johnson admits not one into the society of his fifty-two "English Poets." Nevertheless, among the omitted poetesses are some whose works will be held in honour when many of the names placed by those eminent critics upon the bead-roll of fame shall have dropped for ever out of remembrance.

Never were the true objects of poetic powers more accurately or more magnificently set forth than by him, who in after years, left to posterity the highest and most complete examples in illustration of his own precepts—John Milton:—"These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God, rarely bestowed, but yet to some

(though most abuse) in every nation, and are of power, beside the office of a pulpit, to imbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune, to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what He works, and what He suffers to be wrought with high providence in His church; to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ; to deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and God's true worship. Lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave; whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtleties and refluxes of man's thoughts from within; all these things with a solid and treatable smoothness to point out and describe. Teaching over the whole book of sanctity and virtue, through all the instances of example, with such delight, to those especially of soft and delicious temper, who will not so much as look upon Truth herself unless they see her elegantly dressed; that whereas the paths of honesty and good life appear now rugged and difficult, though they be, indeed, easy and pleasant, they will then appear to all men both easy and pleasant, though they were rugged and difficult indeed."*

It is mortifying to recognize the historic fact that, after the exposition of these unquestionable canons of true poetry, and the exhibition of their worthy exemplars, there followed the long tyranny of pert mediocrity and profligate folly. The comic branch of the dramatic poetry of the Restoration has been deservedly satirized by the masterly

* 'Reason of Church Government,' book ii.

hand of Lord Macaulay, in his Essay entitled 'Leigh Hunt.' Nothing can more strikingly exhibit the vicious morality of any civilized generation of human beings than the general desecration of holy things to profane uses. Poetry represents the highest forms of thought, and

"As a man thinketh, so is he."

From Waller to Pope all our poetic streams are rendered more or less turbid by the impurity of their channels. Perhaps those writers who resist the evil, prove its existence as strongly as its perpetrators, not only by direct and condemnatory exposure, but by the sullied brightness of their own golden armour.

The production of poetry by individual minds is usually the result of strong but subsiding emotion: it resembles the swelling waves which succeed the storm at sea, and cast rainbow-prisms upon the beach; it resembles the re-appearing sunshine, after clouds of gloom, exhaling the soft, sweet moisture from the refreshed earth. As it is with one author, so is it with the aggregate of authors; and great political commotions, ending in public security, have generally called forth into successful exercise the abilities of many minds. The "sun-bursts," as they have been beautifully called by Campbell, are few, but glorious, in our national literature.

In poetry may be perceived the peculiar character of the author, the principles by which he is actuated, the habits of his daily life, the knowledge which he possesses, the thoughts which direct, and the feelings which agitate him; the social spirit of the age, and its influence upon his ideas, and upon their mode of expression.

In poetry may most advantageously be studied the variations of language, the precise periodic meanings of

words, their just appropriations to certain ideas, and their multiplied and flexible capabilities of expansion under differing arrangements of situation and combination.

In poetry may be discerned a compendium of the knowledge of the age, a reflection of its manners, and the essence of its spirit.

The elegant pen of Richard Price has well declared that—"Though poetry be not the child of learning, it is modified in every age by the current knowledge of the country; and, as an imitative art, it is always either borrowing from the imagery of existing models, or wrestling with the excellencies which distinguish them."*

The women of every age take its spirit from the men, and their share in the national poetry is like their part in a concert, to which men's voices give fulness and power, and of which men are the musical composers and directors.

* Preface to Warton's 'History of English Poetry.'

CHAPTER VIII.

THE POETESSES.

A.D. 1700-1725.

Lady Chudleigh — Mary Monk — The Countess of Winchelsea — De La Rivière Manley.

"But true it is, the generous mind,
By candour swayed, by taste refined,
Will nought but vice disdain;
Nor will the breast where fancy glows
Deem every flower a weed that blows
Amid the desert plain."—SHENSTONE.

MARY LADY CHUDLEIGH.

MARY, daughter of Richard Lee, Esq., of Winslade, in the county of Devon, was born in the year 1656; she married Sir George Chudleigh, Bart., of Ashton, in the same county, and died in 1710. Her published works were 'The Ladies' Defence;' 'Poems on several Occasions,' of which the third edition appeared in 1722; and 'Essays upon several Subjects in Prose and Verse,' 1710. She left in manuscript two tragedies, two operas, a masque, a Versified Paraphrase of Lucian's Dialogues, and other pieces, none worthy of quotation.

MRS. MONK.

Mary, second daughter of Robert Molesworth, who long filled the office of English ambassador at the court of Denmark, and was created a viscount in 1716, became the

wife of George Monk, Esq., and died in the flower of her age in 1715. Her poems were published in the following year, with a dedication from her father's pen to Caroline, Princess of Wales. The title of the volume is 'Marinda, Poems and Translations upon several occasions.' Lord Molesworth introduces its contents with the following remarkable paragraph:—

"Most of them are the product of the leisure hours of a young gentlewoman lately dead, who, in a remote country retirement, without any assistance but that of a good library, and without omitting the daily care due to a large family, not only perfectly acquired the several languages here made use of, but the good morals and principles contained in those books, so as to put them in practice, as well during her life and languishing sickness as at the hour of her death; in short, she died not only like a Christian, but a Roman lady, and so became at once the object of the grief and comfort of her relations. As much as I am obliged to be sparing in commending what belongs to me, I cannot forbear thinking some of these circumstances uncommon enough to be taken notice of. *I loved her more because she deserved it than because she was mine,* and I cannot do greater honour to her memory than by consecrating her labours, or rather her diversions, to your Royal Highness, as we found most of them in her escritoire after her death written with her own hand; little expecting, and as little desiring, the public should have an opportunity either of applauding or condemning them." *

Many of her pieces are translations from the Italian of Tasso, Petrarch, and Guarini, and a few from Spanish authors. Her original poems are most of them sullied by the vicious habits of her time, which so obscured the moral

* Ballard, p. 289.

perceptions even of the pure in heart as to permit the familiar use of indelicate allusions. The lines addressed to her husband from her death-bed at Bath, fully justify, however, her father's tender encomium:—

"Thou, who dost all my worldly thoughts employ,
Thou pleasing source of all my earthly joy;
Thou tenderest husband and thou dearest friend,
To thee this first, this last adieu I send.
At length, the conqueror death asserts his right,
And will for ever veil me from thy sight,
He woos me to him with a cheerful grace,
And not one terror clouds his meagre face:
He promises a lasting rest from pain,
And shows that all life's fleeting joys are vain:
The eternal scenes of heaven he sets in view,
And tells me that no other joys are true.
But love, fond love, would yet resist his power,
Would fain awhile defer the parting hour.
He brings thy mourning image to my eyes,
And would obstruct my journey to the skies.
But say, thou dearest, thou unwearied friend,
Say, should'st thou grieve to see my sorrows end?
Thou know'st a painful pilgrimage I've passed,
And should'st thou grieve that rest is come at last?
Rather rejoice to see me shake off life,
And die, as I have lived, thy faithful wife!"

Anne Countess of Winchelsea.

Anne, daughter of Sir William Kingsmill, Knight, of Sidmonton, in the county of Southampton, became Maid-of-Honour to Mary of Modena, when Duchess of York. Neither the year of her birth, nor that of her Court appointment, nor that of her marriage with the Hon. Heneage Finch, are recorded by her biographer. The appointment must have been in or after 1673, the year of Mary of Modena's marriage. The Hon. Heneage Finch is distinctly stated by Ballard, on the authority of 'The General Dictionary,' "to have been in his father's lifetime Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Duke of York." Heneage, second Earl of Winchelsea, died in 1689; but

King Charles II.'s decease, in 1685, having raised his brother James to the throne, it would appear, by the strict limitation of terms, that Mr. and Mrs. Finch had resigned their places at that conjuncture. In 1712 the Hon. Heneage Finch succeeded his nephew in the family title, and became fourth Earl of Winchelsea. His Countess published, in 1713, an octavo volume entitled 'Miscellaneous Poems on several Occasions, written by a Lady.' Several of her pieces appeared in the fashionable collections of the period: others are believed to remain still unpublished. She died August 5, 1720, leaving no children. The Earl, her widower, died in 1726. Her verses on 'The Spleen' are very poor, and ill deserve the praise lavished on them by contemporary flatterers. Her answer to half a dozen rhymed couplets, "occasioned by four verses in 'The Rape of the Lock,'" is sharp-witted and adroit, but pert and unpleasing. Her celebrated Apologue of 'The Atheist and the Acorn,' doubtless did good service in its day. It is also remarkable for having suggested to Hannah More another Apologue called 'The Two Gardeners,' and published among the Cheap Repository Tracts:—

THE ATHEIST AND THE ACORN.

" 'Methinks this world is oddly made
And every thing amiss;'
A dull complaining Atheist said,
As stretch'd he lay beneath a shade,
And instanced in this.

'Behold,' quoth he, 'that mighty thing,
A pumpkin large and round,
Is held but by a little string,
Which upward cannot make it spring,
Nor bear it from the ground.

While on this tree a fruit, so small,
So disproportion'd grows,
That whosoe'er surveys this all,
This universal casual ball,
Its ill contrivance knows.

My better judgment would have hung
That fruit upon this tree,
And left this nut thus slightly strung,
'Mongst things that on the surface sprung,
And weak and feeble be.'

No more the caviller could say,
No further faults descry,
For upward gazing as he lay,
An acorn, loosen'd from its stay,
Fell down upon his eye.

The wounded part with tears ran o'er,
As punish'd for the sin,
Fool! had that bough a pumpkin bore,
Thy whimsies would have worked no more,
Nor skull have kept them in."

Descriptive poetry can never be truly delightful, unless it is so perfectly original and so thoroughly natural as to enkindle a beholder's sensations in the reader. One borrowed phrase, one artificial interpolation, one false image, will mar the whole effect of a fine verbal picture; while the slightest discrepancy between the poet's expressions and the obvious suggestions of the scene, must inevitably excite disgust.

Any one accustomed to contemplate rural nature under the shades of night, in stillness and in solitude, must be struck with surprise and won to sympathy by the enchanting reproduction of emotions peculiar to that scene and hour in 'The Nocturnal Reverie.' It is thoroughly original; a living landscape redolent of sweet tranquillity, full of energy in gentlest exercise. The key-note of this most musical combination of words, thoughts, and images, seems to have been derived from Shakspeare's 'Merchant of Venice,' act v., scene 1, where Lorenzo and Jessica in quiet enjoyment play upon the phrase, "In such a night." It is most true,

"Soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony."

Every stroke of Lady Winchelsea's description is effective;

and the horse, grazing leisurely and wandering at will as he crops the inviting herbage, is wonderfully true to nature.

The 'Salisbury,' whose strong and steady lustre is advantageously contrasted with the pale and flickering sparkle of the glow-worm, was probably Lady Anne Tufton, second daughter of Thomas, sixth Earl of Thanet, who married, in 1709, James Cecil, fifth Earl of Salisbury. Perhaps these verses were originally addressed to her, and perhaps she accompanied Lady Winchelsea in the midnight stroll which occasioned them. Anyhow, this allusion indicates the existence of a friendship between the two countesses, and rescues the memory of one from the obscurity of ancestral archives.

A Nocturnal Reverie.

"In such a night, when every louder wind
Is to its distant cavern safe confined,
And only gentle Zephyr fans his wings,
And lonely Philomel still waking sings;
Or from some tree, famed for the owl's delight,
She, holloaing clear, directs the wanderer right.
In such a night, when passing clouds give place,
Or thinly veil the heaven's mysterious face;
When in some river overhung with green,
The wavering moon and trembling leaves are seen,
When freshened grass now bears itself upright,
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,
Where springs the woodbine and the bramble-rose,
And where the sleepy cowslip sheltered grows,
Whilst now a paler hue the foxglove takes,
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes,
When scattered glow-worms, but in twilight fine,
Show trivial beauties, watch their hour to shine;
Whilst Salisbury stands the test of every light,
In perfect charms and perfect virtue bright;
When odours which declined repelling day,
Through temperate air uninterrupted stray;
When darkened groves their softest shadows wear,
And falling waters we distinctly hear;
When through the gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient fabric, awful in repose;
While sunburnt hills their swarthy looks conceal,
And swelling haycocks thicken up the vale;

When the loosed horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing through the adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace and lengthened shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear;
When nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,
And unmolested kine re-chew their cud,
When curlews cry beneath the village walls,
And to her struggling brood the partridge calls;
Their short-lived jubilee the creatures keep
Which but endures while tyrant man does sleep;
When a sedate content the spirit feels,
And no fierce light disturbs whilst it reveals;
But silent musings urge the mind to seek
Something too high for syllables to speak;
Till the free soul to a composedness charmed,
Finding the elements of rage disarmed,
O'er all below a solemn quiet grown,
Joys in the inferior world, and thinks it like her own;
In such a night let me abroad remain,
Till morning breaks, and all's confused again;
Our cares, our toils, our clamours are renewed,
Or pleasures seldom reached again pursued."

With equal though varied skill in versification, and in a vein of reflection as true and deeper still, Lady Winchelsea traces

LIFE'S PROGRESS.

"How gaily is at first begun
Our life's uncertain race!
Whilst yet that sprightly morning sun,
With which we just set out to run,
Enlightens all the place.

How smiling the world's prospect lies,
How tempting to go through!
Not Canaan to the prophet's eyes,
From Pisgah, with a sweet surprise,
Did more inviting show.

How soft the first ideas prove
Which wander through our minds,
How full the joys, how free the love
Which does that early season move,
As flowers the western winds.

Our sighs are then but vernal air,
But April drops our tears,
Which swiftly passing, all grows fair,
Whilst beauty compensates our care,
And youth each vapour clears.

But, oh, too soon, alas! we climb,
Scarce feeling we ascend
The gently rising hill of time,
From whence with grief we see that prime
And all its sweetness end.

The die now cast, our station known,
Fond expectation past;
The thorns which former days had sown,
To crops of late repentance grown,
Through which we toil at last.

Whilst every care 's a driving harm,
That helps to bear us down,
Which faded smiles no more can charm,
But every tear 's a winter storm,
And every look 's a frown."

Great experimental knowledge of human life and human feeling is manifested in this poem; and we are induced by it to regret our ignorance of that particular course of experience, by which Lady Winchelsea acquired the wisdom which enhanced the power of her native genius.

In a letter dated "Lichfield, Feb., 1763," these beautiful stanzas are introduced by Miss Seward as "a little orphan ode," which she had learned before she was ten years old from her mother, who had been taught to recite them in her own childhood by a lady who was her friend. Neither Mrs. nor Miss Seward knew the name of their author, nor had ever seen them in print; and Miss Seward declares that she had searched for them "in vain through the pages of our poets." It is remarkable that Sir Walter Scott, who edited Miss Seward's 'Poetical Works,' &c., should not have assigned the "orphan" to its true parent. In Miss Seward's version of 'Life's Progress,' Parnassus is substituted for Pisgah, and many other verbal alterations are made. That copy, like Mr. Park's, contains nine stanzas; the seven, however, suffice for the completeness of the piece, and the other two may well be rejected as redundancies.

Susannah Centlivre.

Mr. Freeman, a gentleman once possessing an estate at Holbeach, in Lincolnshire, being a dissenter and a zealous anti-royalist, forfeited his property and fled to Ireland after the return of the Stuarts: he either took a wife with him, or married there, and there his daughter Susannah is supposed to have been born, in or about the year 1680. He died when she was only three years old, but she seems to have enjoyed many educational advantages. Her turn for poetry was early manifested; at seven years old she wrote a song, and she always loved books better than fine clothes and better than fine company, though by no means indifferent to those gratifications. The death of her mother left her an indigent orphan, at the age of thirteen; and two years afterwards her beauty and vivacity won the affections and the hand of a Mr. Fox, nephew of the distinguished statesman Sir Stephen, progenitor of the houses of Ilchester and Holland. In the course of a twelvemonth she was left a widow, and after a short interval is said to have taken, as her second husband, a military officer named Carrol, to whom she was fondly attached. She had not been his wife more than eighteen months when he was killed in a duel. Finding herself poor and desolate, she had recourse to her pen for the means of subsistence; and having a passion both for the written and acted drama she also went upon the stage. While performing before the Court at Windsor, dressed in man's clothes, in the part of Alexander the Great, in Lee's tragedy of that name, she attracted the admiring attention of Joseph Centlivre, Yeoman of the Mouth to Queen Anne and George I., and married him in 1706. Good-natured, agreeable, and merry, she led a happy life with the well-contented

yeoman, and died at his house in Spring Gardens, December 1st, 1723. She produced nineteen successful plays, all more or less remarkable for ability, and the comedies especially for cleverness and wit, though strongly tinctured with the indelicacy of her time. 'The Busy Body,' 'The Bold Stroke for a Husband,' and 'The Wonder,' are still accounted standards on the stage. Her works were posthumously published in three volumes. Noble, in his continuation of Granger, mentions a mezzotinto engraving of her by Pelham, from a portrait by Firmin.

Mrs. Manley.

This clever woman was born in the island of Guernsey, of which her father, Sir Roger Manley, was the governor. Her mother died while she was an infant. Her father, whom she alleged to be the author of the first volume of 'The Turkish Spy,'* remarked her early indications of mental ability, and provided her with a good education. Dying while she was scarcely more than a child, Sir Roger left his daughter to the guardianship of a near kinsman, who, betraying the sacred trust thus reposed in him, won the young girl's affections, married her, and brought her to London. Here, far away from her old friends and the home of her childhood, the dreadful discovery was made that her husband had been previously married to a wife who was still living; and here her betrayer abandoned her to disgrace and poverty. After about three years, Mrs. Manley was introduced to the notorious Duchess of Cleveland, who took

* For a curious disquisition on 'The Turkish Spy' and its authorship, the reader is referred to Hallam's 'Literature of Europe,' ed. iv., vol. iii., pp. 569-73, both text and notes, where the first volume is without hesitation assigned to John Paul Marana, a native of Genoa. The subject is likewise discussed in Boswell's 'Life of Johnson' and in Mrs. Cockburn's works.

her under her especial patronage, received her into her house, and treated her with great hospitality for a period of six months. At the end of that time the Duchess, in a fit of caprice, turned Mrs. Manley out of doors, who, being cast entirely upon her own exertions for support, and longing probably to regain a place in the gay society for which she had acquired a relish, wrote soon afterwards her first tragedy, 'The Royal Mischief,' which was successfully performed at the Theatre Royal in the year 1696, the earliest date which we find attached to any incident of Mrs. Manley's erratic career. The fashionable favour won by this production she too eagerly strove to increase by her play called 'The Lost Lover, or Jealous Husband,' which was produced in the same year and failed. In 1707 her tragedy of 'Almyna, or the Arabian Vow' was brought out.

While thus occupied with dramatic compositions her social connections involved her in the political partizanship of that licentious age, and she wrote the four volumes of 'Memoirs of the New Atlantis,' a defamatory and scandalous work, chiefly, though not exclusively, directed against the Whig party then in power. A warrant from the Secretary of State's office having consequently been sent to seize the printer and publisher, Mrs. Manley avowed the authorship, was examined before Lord Sunderland, and replied to his interrogations with flippant falsehoods, carefully screening from censure not only the apprehended tradesmen, but all the persons who had supplied her with information.

Her 'Court Intrigues' and 'Memoirs of Europe towards the close of the eighteenth century,' belonged to her defamatory and political series.

A change of ministry taking place in the year 1710, she became a defender of the government.

'The Examiner,' a weekly paper, having been commenced by Henry St. John (Lord Bolingbroke), Matthew Prior, and their confederates, had issued only thirteen numbers, when, on the 10th of November, 1710, Swift became its editor. He carried it on with great success, writing every article himself, until June 14, 1711, when, under his continued direction, Mrs. Manley undertook to write for it, and she carried it on with much spirit and little conscience during the remainder of the reign of Queen Anne, who died August 1, 1714.

In Nichols's 'Collection of Poems,' vol. vii., p. 369, are some verses by Mrs. Manley, addressed to the Countess of Bristol, Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Sir Thomas Felton, second wife of John first Earl of Bristol and mother of John Lord Harvey. Lady Bristol was then in the prime of life, and her children in their infancy. The verses run upon a level line of mediocrity, and as they declare—

> "Thee, lovely Bristol, thee, with pride I choose,
> The first and only subject of my muse;"

it is to be hoped that no other heroic or pseudo-heroic couplets can be laid to Mrs. Manley's charge.

In the year 1717 her tragedy of 'Lucius' was brought out and well received by the public.

It was probably in connection with 'The Examiner' that Mrs. Manley made the acquaintance of Alderman Barber, a printer and a high Tory, who invited her to his house on Lambeth Hill, where she resided until her death, which took place on the 11th of July, 1724. She was buried in the church of St. Bennet, Paul's Wharf.

She published an autobiographical account of her own

life under the title of 'Memoirs of Rivella,' which the writer of these pages has not seen. None of her productions have lived, or deserved to live, although her popularity was great in her day, and her talents undoubtedly were versatile and engaging.

As an extraordinary instance of the love of the public for gossip and slander, it may be mentioned here that a seventh edition of her 'New Atlantis' was published in the year 1736.

The memory of the fabled or mythic Atlantis of the ancients, and the zeal for maritime discovery, which in the sixteenth century, stimulated by the success of Columbus, had directed daring English navigators to seek the north-west passage near the Arctic Pole, and a new Atlantis at the Antarctic, furnished Lord Bacon with a basis on which to rear the imaginary fabric of 'Solomon's College, or the College of the Six Days' Works,' and that same uncertain site, the New Atlantis, was subsequently chosen by Mrs. Manley as the scene of her disgraceful tales.

Thus does the same conjectural fact, or figment, afford either a field for the cultivation of the choicest fruits, or a waste place for the reception of the vilest refuse.

CHAPTER IX.

THE POETESSES.

A.D. 1725-1750.

Jane Brereton — Elizabeth Rowe — Catherine Cockburn.

"L'énigme de la destinée humaine n'est de rien pour la plupart des hommes; le poëte l'a toujours présente à l'imagination."—'L'Allemagne,' vol. i., seconde partie, chap. x.

The enigma of human destiny is as nothing to most people; but to the imagination of the poet it is ever present.

MRS. BRERETON.

JANE, daughter of Thomas Hughes, of Bryn Gryffid, near Mold, in Flintshire, and of Anne Jones his wife, was born in the year 1685. Her father was an intelligent, well-informed man, and took care to cultivate his child's promising abilities. In 1711, she married Mr. Thomas Brereton, the only son of Major Brereton, of a good Cheshire family, who was at that time a commoner of Brazennose College, Oxford. Having been imprudent, and outrun his pecuniary means, Mr. Brereton for some time sought refuge in France from his creditors. Returning, he obtained employment in the Custom-House department; and being stationed at Park Gate, near Chester, was accidentally drowned in February, 1722, at Saltney, by attempting to cross when the tide was coming in. His remains were interred in Shotwick Chapel, which belonged to his kinsman, Thomas Brereton, Esq., M.P. for Liverpool.

After her widowhood Mrs. Brereton took up her abode at Wrexham, where she died, Aug. 7, 1740, leaving two surviving daughters, Lucy and Charlotte. She had been a contributor of verses to 'The Gentleman's Magazine,' using the signature of "Melissa." A volume, containing her poems, letters, and an account of her life, was published in 1744: Edward Cave, London. The candid and chivalrous Sir Egerton Brydges has enshrined her name in the third volume of 'The Censura Literaria.'

Elizabeth Rowe.

Elizabeth was the eldest of three daughters, the only children of respectable and opulent parents, Mr. Walter Singer, a dissenting minister, who had suffered imprisonment for nonconformity, and his wife Elizabeth Portnell. They were persons of deep and consistent piety, who brought up their children in faith, hope, and charity, and set them a daily example of practical truth, justice, and kindness.

Elizabeth Singer was born at Ilchester, in Somersetshire, Sept. 11, 1674, the same year in which Dr. Isaac Watts first saw the light. She had a constitutional complacency of disposition, strong affections, and joyous spirits; and from her early infancy she received the home lessons of piety and goodness as congenial and delightful beyond all other things. When a child she manifested great fondness for music, painting, and poetry; being enchanted with melodious sounds; accustomed to squeeze out the various coloured juices of plants to tincture her little pictures before she received lessons from a drawing-master; and to make verses at twelve years' old. Her general education in mental exercises, manual occupations, and personal accomplishments, was only such as an ordi-

nary middle-class boarding-school of the seventeenth century could supply.

On her mother's death, her father removed his family into the neighbourhood of Frome, where his landed property principally lay. His freedom from sectarian bigotry, his good sense, and great benevolence, obtained for him general respect; and the first Lord Weymouth, a shrewd discerner of character, used often to visit and converse with Mr. Singer, as did also Bishop Kenn when staying at Longleat. When Elizabeth Singer was about nineteen years of age, a copy of her verses chanced to find their way to that mansion, and they excited in the Thynne family a wish to become acquainted with the young poetess. The home circle at Longleat then consisted of Lord and Lady Weymouth, their only son, the Hon. Henry Thynne, his wife Grace, the only daughter and heir of Sir George Strode, with the two children of Mr. and Mrs. Thynne, Frances and Mary. Acquaintance soon led to friendship, and friendship to intimacy, and Elizabeth Singer spent much of her time at Longleat, at a period of her life when an introduction to persons of elevated rank, elegant habits, and high intellectual culture, was gratifying alike to her imagination and her feelings. Mr. Thynne himself became her instructor in the French and Italian languages, and the tender friendship of Mrs. Thynne concurred with the native refinement of her taste, in leading her readily to acquire all the fascinating graces of manner and demeanour which adorn the upper classes of society, and constitute the well-bred gentlewoman. Here also began the fond and life-long attachment between Elizabeth Singer and Frances Thynne, afterwards Countess of Hertford and Duchess of Somerset; an attachment enhanced by mutual respect, endeared by the recollection of participated

joys and sorrows, and hallowed by religion. Anne, the poetical Countess of Winchelsea, was sister-in-law to Lady Weymouth, and Elizabeth Singer had the privilege of making her acquaintance, and that of many other eminent and excellent persons at Longleat.

Her person was very fine, her complexion brilliant, her countenance most benign and lovely, her manners soft and lively, her voice flute-like, her conversation eloquent and full of soul. She had, besides all these advantages, that ineffable charm which Lord Clarendon attributes to Lord Falkland, in being "so exactly easy and affable to all men, that his face and countenance was always present and vacant to his company," so as to hold "any cloudiness and less pleasantness of the visage a kind of rudeness and incivility." Her admirers were numerous, and among those whose addresses she declined to accept was Matthew Prior, the poet, in whose verses she has found one of her many monuments.

In the year 1696, she was induced to publish a collection of her juvenile poems under the name of "Philomela;" a designation which, seeming to arrogate a place of supremacy among poetesses such as belongs to the nightingale among birds, might justly render her liable to the charge of egregious vanity. It is probable, however, that her noble friends chose the name as a sort of play upon her patronymic, and as a compliment to her rhyming skill, and that her fault consisted only in the want of resolution to resist their decision. The appellation she retained through life, without personal scruple or public cavil; but in after days she never ceased to regret having written those poems and allowed them to be printed; considering them as idle and worthless effusions, incapable of doing good to anybody. Her judgment in this instance was probably

correct. A contemporary poet thus gently satirizes these early effusions of Mrs. Rowe;—

'Singer, by name and nature, made
For music and the rhyming trade,
For her weak genius soared too high,
And lost her muse above the sky;
A flaming sun, a radiant light,
In every verse distract our sight,
Diffuse their dazzling beams from far,
And not one line without a star;
Through streams of light we seem to rove
And tread on shining orbs above."*

Her religion was not the result of disappointment, sickness, or incapacity for this world's enjoyments; nor did it owe its origin to the fear of punishment to come. It was a free choice of permanent spiritual happiness, in preference to the transient joys of time and sense. Her health was firm, her temperament sanguine; she was from education habitually serene, and in natural disposition cheerful and sprightly. Her social feelings were kindly, and her affections warm. In friendship, in love, and in devotion to God, she was an enthusiast. Like all true enthusiasts she was simple-minded and sincere, earnest and disinterested. Her daily vivacity and good-humour were as remarkable as the purity of her conduct, and the fervour of her devout aspirations. Indolence and inactivity, softness and credulity, are faults to which she lays claim with probable justness, for they are the very weeds most likely to spring up in a soil so free from all acrid and pungent admixtures.

The first volume of her 'Miscellaneous Works' contains, besides later compositions, several specimens of her poetry written between the twenty-second and the thirty-sixth year of her age, which prove her to have entered with zeal

* 'Bibliotheca, occasioned by the sight of a modern Library,' first published in 1712, and conjecturally assigned by Nichols to Dr. King.

into the spirit of all those pleasurable occasions which call forth verses of society, tending to promote the entertainment and to enliven the abundant leisure of a circle of guests assembled in a country mansion.

Having been taught by her father to abstain from all games of amusement, she never could be prevailed upon by any one to learn how to play at them. It is said that she never but once was known to take a hand at cards, and that she did so then on purpose to lose a sum of money to a person whom she knew to be in want of it.

In the year 1708, she participated in the grief of the Longleat family on the death of the Hon. Henry Thynne, and wrote a poem to his memory.

She was too happy in her domestic and social relations to marry without a decided preference, and consequently remained a maiden until middle life. In the year 1709, being on a visit at Bath, Mr. Thomas Rowe was introduced to her, and a mutual attachment ensued. He was the son of Dr. Watts's friend, the Rev. Benoni Rowe, and a member of the same dissenting body as her father and herself. Mr. Thomas Rowe had been very carefully educated at the Charter House and at the University of Leyden, probably with the intention of fitting him to become the head of an academy or collegiate institution. He was a man of genius and of great scholastic acquirements, whose chief satisfaction consisted in classical studies and in conversation, for which he had peculiar talents. He was of an eager and ardent temper, and of blameless purity of life. They were married in 1710, he being then twenty-three years of age, and his bride thirty-six. The union was a very happy one, and had no other drawback than Mr. Rowe's delicate health. They spent their winters in London to gratify his fondness for society, and the other

seasons of each year in some country seclusion. In 1712, Mrs. Rowe had the small-pox, which happily left her beauty and her constitutional health alike uninjured, while it elicited poetical condolences and congratulations from her friends.

On the 28th of July, 1714, she had the affliction of losing her kind friend, Thomas Thynne, first Viscount Weymouth; at whose decease, without male issue, Longleat, with the title, passed to another branch of his family, and his grand-daughters, Frances Countess of Hertford, and Mary Lady Brooke, became his personal heirs.

Towards the close of the same year, the rapid decline of Mr. Rowe's health gave signs of preparation to his wife of a far deeper sorrow. She nursed her husband with fond, untiring assiduity day and night, removing with him from place to place to obtain every advantage of medical advice and change of air, until, on the 13th of May, 1715, while sojourning at Hampstead among his near relations, he died of consumption at the age of twenty-eight. Her grief was extreme, and the bereaved and childless woman determined henceforth to realize her idea of the habits of the "widows who are widows indeed," to withdraw from society, which his death had rendered distasteful, to consecrate herself to his memory, and to devote the whole of her remaining life to pious meditations and to works of charity. She withdrew to her paternal home, and in the placid calm of her saintly father's companionship soon recovered her natural cheerfulness; adhering stedfastly and strictly to her resolve, which, doubtful of her own compliant nature, she appears to have strengthened by a vow. The biographers do not relate what became of her two sisters, but it is certain, from an expression in one of her familiar letters, that she had neither nephew or niece.

On the 18th of April, 1719, Mr. Singer died, full of peaceful hope, and bequeathed to Mrs. Rowe his whole estate, who solemnly determined regularly to devote half her income to charitable uses. This vow she more than fulfilled, abridging her personal comforts in order to save money to give away. She once said to an intimate friend, "Half the pleasure of my life would be lost if there were no poor." Her kindness was not confined to those in abject need; she sought out cases of concealed or unobtrusive privation, and with all the delicacy of a generous heart evaded gratitude when she relieved distress. She used to say that "it was one of the greatest benefits that could be done to mankind, to free them from the cares and anxieties of a narrow fortune."

To comfort mourners she deemed her especial mission; and on the death, in 1720, of her friend Mary Lady Brooke, she left her quiet place of retreat, at the entreaty of Mrs. Thynne, the sorrowing mother, and stayed several months with her in London. She fed and clothed the poor, paid for the instruction of untaught children, supplied all the readers in her neighbourhood with Bibles and good books, irrespective of sectarian prejudices, and moved like an angel of beneficence in her little sphere, spreading serenity and joy around her. She took singular delight not only in relieving every form and degree of distress, but in imparting pleasure both by the sweetest and most endearing kindness of manner, and by gifts of her own drawings, pious books, and anything else which she had reason to believe was desired or would be particularly acceptable. She was very tender of hurting anybody's feelings, and perfectly understood the practice of that beautiful precept, "Honour all men;" while, with benignant gentleness, she refrained from taking offence at any instances she

chanced to meet with of insolence and ingratitude. To render people happy was the delight of her heart and the labour of her life, and her home was a very temple of peace. Perhaps her indulgence to her servants was excessive, but they never quitted her unless to marry. She abjured every species of evil-speaking, and deemed unkindness, ill-will, and malignity, to be more heinous offences than the sins consequent upon mere bodily temptations.

Moral excellence of the highest kind, including the strict subjection of the thoughts and feelings to the rule of righteousness, is never attained at a single effort even by the noblest natures; it is always the result of frequent minor failures, and of incessantly-renewed self-conquests. The private papers of Mrs. Rowe show the simple and earnest sincerity with which she achieved these "toils divine." The perusal of her familiar letters, and of her elaborate prose compositions and poems, leaves an impression on the mind that she must have lived in the daily dread of death, and that her religion was of a sentimental and morbid cast. The perusal of her biography, written by Henry Grove, her personal friend, and by Theophilus Rowe, her brother-in-law, counteracts that impression most effectually; and the combined result of both is the conviction that there never lived a more humble-minded or a better woman.

Her dearest friend was Frances, wife of Algernon Earl of Hertford and Lord Percy, afterwards seventh Duke of Somerset, and then concentrating in his person all the hereditary honours of the Percys and the Seymours, and more peerages than were ever before or since possessed by one British subject.

At the request of the Countess, Mrs. Rowe went at

various times to share the summer pleasures of her country houses, or to solace her by companionship under afflictive circumstances. They maintained a constant correspondence, and an interchange of verses, drawings, books, and fancy work. Once, when Mrs. Rowe felt an unconquerable averseness to change of scene, the Countess volunteered to become her guest; and the visit was gladly accepted with only one stipulation, that her ladyship should write out her own bill of fare every morning. The friends enjoyed themselves so thoroughly on this occasion that the Countess subsequently came again and again to sojourn in Mrs. Rowe's humble dwelling.

Lady Hertford's pen has eulogized the character of her revered Mrs. Rowe in some elegiac stanzas, in which she describes her as—

> "From the world retired,
> Though by that world distinguished and admired."

In the copy of Thomson's 'Hymn to Solitude,' printed among Mrs. Rowe's letters, instead of 'Musidora,' 'Philomela' is represented as the companion of "the gentle-looking Hertford:"—

> "As with her, Philomela, she,
> (Her Philomela fond of thee),
> Amid the long-withdrawing vale
> Awakes the rival nightingale."

In one of her letters she recommends Thomson's 'Winter,' then recently published, to her friend's attention; and after having made that poet's personal acquaintance, she addressed to him some congratulatory lines, in verse, upon his having won Lady Hertford's approval. Without any pretensions to erudition, Mrs. Rowe was a well-read woman, with a spontaneous fertility of mind and ready powers of expression.

In the year 1728, she published her 'Friendship in

Death, in Twenty Letters, from the Dead to the Living.' Her avowed object in this work was "to make the mind contract, as it were, unawares, an habitual persuasion of our future existence, by writings built on that foundation, and addressed to the affections and imagination." In 1729, she published the first part of her 'Letters, Moral and Entertaining;' in 1731, the second part; and in 1733, the third part. Both these works acquired great and immediate celebrity; they were translated into French, and republished at Amsterdam in 1740. Being written with animated ease and elegance, an exuberance of fanciful circumstances and fantastic decorations give attraction to these series of short amatory tales; but it is to be feared that their anti-Sadducean tendencies, and their "examples of heroic virtue, and the most generous benevolence," made little impression upon such of their readers as were not already practical Christians.

Having been acquainted with them as works of amusement in early youth, and re-perusing them now in the autumn of life, the feeling of the girl and the judgment of the critic coincide so entirely as to induce self-confidence in the declaration, that the disproportionate value assigned in them to the passion of love, and the sentimentalism of their general tone, are likely to provoke the contempt of the strong and to assist the enervation of the weak. They were fitted only for their day, and for a few in that day. In the year 1736, Mrs. Rowe published her poem, called 'The History of Joseph,' to which, at the urgent request of her friend Lady Hertford, she afterwards wrote a sequel, in two books, which was published early in 1737. In this poem there is a larger accumulation of historical knowledge than in all her other compositions put together. Having a natural faculty for narration, she has not only told the

story fluently, in easy couplets of heroic verse, but also introduced so many apt illustrations and entertaining episodes as to make the eight first books pleasant reading. The ninth and tenth are of inferior merit, presenting merely a rhymed repetition of Scripture facts, and, consequently, a depreciating recital.

She had great fairness and candour, and judged impartially her own productions. "I have wrote no pious meditations of late. The warmth of devotion, perhaps, as well as other passions, declines with life; but I hope the calm, the reasonable, and solid parts of religion will be still improved." *

A collection of these meditations she bequeathed to Dr. Watts for posthumous publication, with the hope that they might prove the means of fostering religion in other hearts as they had done in her own. Dr. Watts gave them the title of 'Devout Exercises,' and in his preface apologised for some expressions which might seem "a little too rapturous."

In the summer of the year 1736, she suffered from an attack of serious illness, and her biographer, Mr. Theophilus Rowe, admits that "this disorder (as she expressed herself to one of her most intimate friends) found her mind not quite so serene and prepared to meet death as usual." In fact, she then learned the difference between imaginative anticipations formed at ease and in health, and the real failing of flesh and heart under the horrors of the mortal curse. Her piety was genuine, and well it stood the trial. Prayer to the Heavenly Father whom she had served all her life long, and the consideration of the Divine Saviour's atonement and constant mediation for sinners, enabled her to prove the consolations of "the Holy Ghost,

* 80th Letter to the Countess of Hertford.

the Comforter," and so to triumph over sufferings in the prospect of death, that she repeated Pope's 'Dying Christian to his Soul' with intense delight. From this illness she entirely recovered, regained her usual health, strength, and gaiety of heart, and occupied herself, as she ever delighted to do, in active works of piety and charity, and friendly benevolence. She was afraid of illness lest its pain and languor should render her impatient and melancholy, and betray her into conduct that might in any way dishonour her religious profession. She prayed frequently to God that He would spare her this temptation, and her prayers were heard.

On Saturday the 19th of February, 1737, she was in perfect health and spirits. At eight o'clock that evening, after conversing with liveliness and laughter, she withdrew to her chamber for the exercise of those meditations and prayers to which she especially devoted herself in preparation for the Sabbath. At ten her maid found Mrs. Rowe lying upon the floor speechless and dying. A physician and a surgeon speedily attended, and did what they could to restore her. She expired a few minutes before 2 A.M. on Sunday, February 20, 1737; passing insensibly from a world in which she had been a blessing, to those regions of immortal felicity, where her seraphic spirit had long desired to be.

In compliance with her directions, her remains were interred under the same gravestone with her father's, in the meeting-house at Frome. The tears and lamentations of her friends and neighbours, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, bewailed her loss, and hallowed her memory.

Her style, both in prose and verse, was formed on that of Addison, preserving much of the elegance of her model,

with still greater ease, copiousness and luxuriance. She wrote with facility, and delighted in the act; but she was no fastidious critic, and loathed the toil of revision. Her translations from the Italian of Tasso, Guarini, and Rolli, and from the French of Racine, are respectable. She is never at a loss for words, and although her mind calls for no exact definitions or fine gradations of meaning, she strikes off the general sense of things successfully.

Her paraphrases of the Scripture, and her versification of the Psalms, are not inferior to those of other devout writers of her time. Her Devout Soliloquies have some little poetical merit. Her hymns want conciseness. The 34th soliloquy is one of her best poetical pieces in blank verse:—

"Look down with pity, gracious Lord, look down
From thy unbounded height of happiness,
On me a wretched but a suppliant sinner.
Thy times are always; mine will soon be past,
And measured out; while thine are still unchanged:
In boundless life and undiminished bliss
Thou sitt'st secure; while all created things
In a perpetual motion glide along,
And every instant change their fleeting forms.

Oh be not slack to hear! my time is winged,
See how my sun declines! 'tis sinking fast,
And dying into darkness; night is near,
The fatal night of death, when I shall sleep
Unactive in the damp and gloomy grave.

This is the important hour, the hour of grace
And offered life; Salvation hangs upon it.
Nor let my importunity offend thee,
'T is now, 't is now or never I must speed;
This day, this hour, this fleeting moment 's more
Than I can boast, or truly call my own.
E'en now it flies—'t is gone—'t is past for ever!

But oh! the strict account I have to give
Remains uncancelled; yet my pardon stands,
Perhaps, unsealed, or not to me confirmed.
Regard my anguish, while I call aloud
For mercy and a signal of thy love.
Before I die, oh let my longing soul
Receive an earnest of its future bliss."

Catherine Cockburn.

This remarkable woman was born in London, on the 16th of August, 1679. Both her parents were Scotch. Her father, Captain David Trotter, was a commodore in the Royal Navy; a man of cultivated mind and elegant taste, eminent for courage, integrity, and honour; respected by the noblest of his fellow-countrymen, and personally known to King Charles II. and the Duke of York, who admired his high qualities and appreciated his distinguished services.

Captain Trotter assisted in the demolition of Tangier in 1683, and being subsequently sent to convoy the fleet of merchant ships belonging to the Turkey Company, died of the plague at Alexandretta (Iscanderoon), early in the year 1684. His property having fallen into dishonest hands, the two-fold affliction of bereavement and poverty fell at once upon his widow and children.

Her mother was Sarah Bellenden, a near relation of Lord Bellenden, and of the Duke of Lauderdale, and the Earl of Perth.

During the short remainder of King Charles II.'s reign Mrs. Trotter had a pension from the Admiralty, and Queen Anne made her an allowance of 20*l.* a-year. It is to be supposed that the widow also received assistance from her husband's brother, and from her own high-born and wealthy cousins, in bringing up her two fatherless children. Both were daughters. The eldest married Dr. Inglis, a medical officer, who attended the Duke of Marlborough in his campaigns, and became physician-general to the army.

Catherine, the youngest, was early remarkable for her sagacious intellect, for her facility in acquiring knowledge, her cleverness in teaching herself the art of penmanship,

and her delight in making extemporary verse. Nothing is recorded of her education, but from her own allusion to it in her 'Poem on the Busts,' it may be inferred to have been slight and ordinary. Nothing, however, could repress her eager desire for information; and obstacles, as usual, proved incentives to effort. She read with avidity, and wrote with emulative zeal; works of imagination occupying, as in such cases they are wont, her childish attention; and these, as her reasoning powers matured, and her judgment became formed, giving place to tractates and treatises on moral philosophy and religion. She taught herself the French language, and, with the assistance of a friend, acquired the Latin. Her "Verses written at the age of fourteen, and sent to Mr. Beville Higgons, on his sickness and recovery from the small-pox," though rather a bold avowal of sympathy with the "lovely youth," and of admiration for his "matchless charms," were evidently well-meant admonitions to resignation, and to the conscientious application of the high qualities and fine "parts" ascribed to him.

Her muse was always didactic, and although her 'Songs,' after the evil fashion of her time, were full of eyes, and sighs, and amatory nonsense, they inculcated self-government and morality.

The professional connections of her father, the aristocratic relationships of her mother, and the celebrity early won by her own extraordinary talents, gained her a large circle of acquaintance; and although straitened in the means of subsistence, and probably possessing little of her own but the earnings of her pen, Catherine Trotter moved in the best society, and was a frequent and welcome guest in the houses of the rich and great: her beauty, and the unaffected sweetness of her manners, bearing the resistless charm of unasserted mental superiority.

Her first dramatic production was the tragedy of 'Agnes de Castro,' which was successfully performed, in the year 1695, at the Theatre Royal, and printed in the following year, with a dedication to the Earl of Dorset and Middlesex, from which it appears that his Lordship was one of her personal friends and advisers. This tragedy was not based upon historic fact, but upon Aphara Behn's English translation of a French novel.

In 1697, Catherine Trotter addressed to Mr. Congreve a set of complimentary verses on his 'Mourning Bride,' and thus either created or strengthened the interest which that poet took in her literary proceedings. His published letter to her shows that they had been previously acquainted.

In 1698, her second tragedy, 'Fatal Friendship,' was performed at the then new theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. It was afterwards printed with a dedication to the Princess of Wales, and not only established Catherine Trotter's reputation as a dramatic writer, and brought down a shower of complimentary verses, but increased the number of her powerful, fashionable, and eminent friends; and, it may reasonably be supposed, produced great pecuniary profit.

In 1700, she was one of the presumptuous Englishwomen who, under the several names of the Nine Muses, bewailed in verse the death of Dryden. She was consequently praised and addressed as a Muse by a troop of admiring rhymers.

In some verses entitled 'Calliope's Directions how to Deserve and Distinguish the Muse's Inspirations,' the strong, clear sense of Catherine Trotter is conspicuously shown by her definition of the uses of tragic, comic, and satiric poetry. Of course, as Calliope, she presided only over heroic strains and general eloquence, and it would have been inappropriate to treat of any other kind of

verse. The quotation of a few lines will show the style of these 'Directions:'—

> "Let none presume the hallowed way to tread
> By other than the noblest motives led:
> If for a sordid gain, or glittering fame,
> To please without instructing be your aim,
> To lower means your grovelling thoughts confine,
> Unworthy of an art that's all divine."

Early in the year 1701, her comedy of 'Love at a Loss, or Most Votes carry it,' was performed at the Theatre Royal, and published in the month of May of the same year, with a dedication to Lady Piers. This Lady Piers, according to Dr. Birch, was the wife of Sir George Piers, a distinguished officer under the Duke of Marlborough. His name does not appear in the pedigree of Piers of Tristernagh, but he was probably of the same stock, Piers, of Piers Hall, in the county of York. Mr. Noble, in his 'Continuation of Granger's Biographical History of England,' * states that Sir George Piers, Bart., was of Stonepit, in the parish of Scale, and county of Kent; that his wife was Sarah, daughter of Matthew Roydon, Esq., of Roydon, in Yorkshire; that she became a widow in the year 1720, and that he had failed in ascertaining the date of her decease. "She had," remarks Dr. Birch, "contracted a very early esteem for, and most intimate and unreserved friendship," with Catherine Trotter.

Later in the same year, 1701, her third tragedy, 'The Unhappy Penitent,' was performed at Drury Lane, and published in August, with a dedication to Lord Halifax, and a set of verses, by Lady Piers, prefixed, inscribed "To the excellent Mrs. Catherine Trotter."

In the year 1701, she wrote her 'Defence of Mr. Locke's Essay of Human Understanding,' and it was published in

* Vol. iii., p. 447.

May, 1702. This gained for her the personal friendship of Locke and of Lady Masham, and was, through them, the means of introducing her to many eminent persons, among them being Mr. Peter King, then a barrister and member of parliament, who was the maternal nephew of Locke. Peter King was chosen Recorder of London in 1708, and knighted on that occasion by Queen Anne. In 1714, he was appointed Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas; in May, 1725, created a peer by King George I. as Lord King, Baron of Ockham; and in June made Lord High Chancellor, which office he held until 1733. In July, 1734, he died.

When childhood merges in youth, and the mind awakens to a keen sense of forlorn dependence on Almighty power, and of awful responsibility to a just, unerring Judge,—perceiving the afflictions, the hazards, and the difficulties which beset life's probationary course, and conscious that immortal joy or woe await its close,—much perplexity is often felt in the choice of a clew through this world's dark labyrinth. Considering the position and connections of her parents, it is probable that Catherine Trotter had not been trained to early piety, and consequently that when this crisis of the soul occurred, the first earnest instructions in religion which seemed to meet her eager need would be welcomed as heaven-sent messages. Under these circumstances, she probably met with a Roman Catholic teacher, and, as a natural result, she zealously adopted his creed. In this she continued for many years, resting quiescently upon its first impressions, and somewhat drawn aside from the direct pursuit of life's highest objects by the specious design of reforming the morals of the age by means of a purified and ennobled theatre. Meanwhile, her strict observance of the fast-days proved so injurious

to her health, that in October, 1703, her friend and physician, Dr. Denton Nicholas, wrote her a letter of serious remonstrance upon the subject, and desired her "to abate of those rigours of abstinence, as insupportable to a constitution naturally infirm," requesting that his opinion might be communicated to her friends and to her confessor.

Her health, even at its best, was too delicate to allow her to walk more than a mile to church and back, on a summer's day, without fatigue which amounted to illness; and a weakness of sight always rendered it painful to her to write by candlelight. Yet this fragile creature possessed self-relying energy which enabled her not only to sustain the mental and manual labour of careful literary composition through continuous months and years, but also to transact with methodical exactness all the complicated business attendant upon the performance, printing, and publication of her works.

From 1701, until her marriage in 1708, Catherine Trotter kept up a regular correspondence with her friend George Burnet, Esq., of Kemnay, a man of the highest character and of distinguished abilities. During the greater part of the period he was a sojourner in foreign lands, and more especially at the courts of Berlin and Hanover, where he spread the fame of "la nouvelle Sappho-Ecossoise," and excited the curiosity of Leibnitz to become acquainted with her philosophical works.

It may be inferred from many passages in his letters that he would gladly have raised for himself a tender interest in the heart of his young friend; and from hers, that, with unaffected candour and cordial esteem, she repelled every approach towards a declaration of love.

She had many admirers, but never was led by the per-

suasions of her friends, or the temptations of wealth and rank, to encourage the addresses of men for whom she felt no preference.

Her conversation was attractive, her manners graceful and engaging, her figure was small and elegant, her complexion delicately fair, and her eyes radiant with intelligence. In youth she was beautiful, and even in old age she continued to be lovely. Her natural disposition was cheerful and obliging, and the high principles which she professed regulated every thought and act of her daily life.

In 1704, Catherine Trotter composed a poem on the Duke of Marlborough's gaining the battle of Blenheim, which, being highly approved of by the hero and his family, was put into print.

About that period she had some hopes of obtaining, through the powerful interest of the Marlborough family, a pension from the crown, to which her father's long services and losses in the cause of his King and country gave a plausible claim. This, however, she failed to obtain, and received only a gratuity.

After the battle of Ramilies, in 1706, she produced another poem in praise of the Duke of Marlborough, and on both occasions her verses were ranked among the best which recorded his fame.

In the same year, her tragedy, called 'The Revolution of Sweden,' founded on Vertot's account of Gustavus Ericson, was performed at the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket; and subsequently printed, with a dedication to Lady Harriet Godolphin, eldest daughter of the great Duke, and after his decease Duchess of Marlborough in her own right.

Her sister, Mrs. Inglis, residing at Salisbury, and her mother spending much of her time there, Catherine was

induced to make long visits to that city, extending sometimes to the period of fifteen months; but her favourite abode was at "Mr. Finney's, in Beaufort Buildings on the Strand," where, in private lodgings, she could, without domestic restraint or the disturbance of young children, give herself up to literary occupations. Among the happy results of her sojournings at Salisbury was her acquaintance with Bishop Burnet, and with his third wife, Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Sir Richard Blake, and widow of Robert Berkeley, Esq., of Spetchley. Mrs. Burnet had a large independent income, which she bestowed in charity, aiding the erection of a hospital which her first husband had founded, establishing and maintaining schools, and relieving the spiritual and temporal wants of the necessitous far and near. She was a woman of deep piety, and the author or compiler of a book called 'A Method of Devotion.' She took an affectionate interest in Catherine Trotter until she died, February 3, 1709.

In Catherine's thoughtful mind a sense of duty towards God, and a desire to reform and benefit the world, were ever predominant; but at different periods of her life she sought to effect this object by different means. In the year 1707, after a course of severe study, deep reflection, and earnest prayer, she abjured the religion of Rome, and wrote and published her 'Two Letters concerning a Guide in Controversies,' to which a preface by Bishop Burnet was prefixed. The first letter was addressed to Mr. Bennet, a priest, and the second to Mr. Harman, as a rejoinder to an answer which she had received.

The strength and clearness of her arguments, the comprehensiveness and acute force of reasoning, and the perspicuity of expression, are admirable, and such as few

female minds could have put forth, even under the stimulus of self-interest in self-vindication.

No scruple ever again affected her staunch adherence to the orthodox faith of the Church of England.

In the summer of that year (1707), while staying with Madame de Vere, at Ockham Mills, near Ripley, in Surrey, she met with a young clergyman named Fenn, of whose preaching, conversation, and character, she thoroughly approved. Mr. Fenn fell deeply in love with her, made her an offer of marriage, and obtained for his suit the sanction and intercession of Lady Piers.

Catherine Trotter accepted his friendship, and, but for the preference she already felt for another person, would have judged it right to become his wife. The favoured rival was Mr. Cockburn, a scholar and a gentleman, distantly related to the Burnet family and to her own, with whom she had for some months held a friendly correspondence, in which they discussed those subjects of philosophical and practical religion which were of principal interest to both. The addresses of Mr. Fenn brought mutual conviction, and matters came to a climax.

Mr. Cockburn confessed his love, proposed, and was accepted. He took holy orders in the Church of England in 1708, married Catherine Trotter, received the "Donative" of Nayland, near Colchester, and, leaving his bride in London to arrange her affairs and to purchase furniture, he took possession of his pastoral charge in June, and welcomed her to their new home in the autumn of the same year.

How long they resided there neither Dr. Birch nor Mrs. Cockburn's writings inform us; but, in the course of time, Mr. Cockburn accepted the curacy of St. Dunstan's Church,

Fleet-street, and returned with his family to London, where they resided until the year 1714, when the death of Queen Anne took place. The oath of abjuration required on the accession of King George I. aroused scruples in the mind of Mr. Cockburn, and he refused to take it, although he conscientiously offered up the public prayers for the reigning sovereign and the royal family. He was consequently deprived of his employment in the church, and reduced to poverty. During the next twelve years he maintained his family by teaching Latin to the students "of the Academy in Chancery Lane," while his wife, ever anxious for self-improvement, and using all the troubles of earth as preparatives for heaven, gave herself up heart and soul to household duties, industriously applied herself to needle-work, and all sorts of manual occupations, and cheerfully devoted her fine faculties to the solace of her husband, and to the education of her children.

Mr. Cockburn, having at last convinced himself of the propriety of taking the oath, to which he had so long objected, accepted, in 1727, the charge of the episcopal congregation at Aberdeen. Thither he was accompanied by his family; and his faithful wife bade, in that year, an everlasting farewell to London, the scene of her many triumphs and many trials.

Soon after their removal her friend, the Lord High Chancellor King, presented her husband to the living of Long Horseley, near Morpeth, in the county of Northumberland; but they continued at Aberdeen until the year 1737, when the Bishop of Durham ordered him to take up his residence in his parish. The clerical residence stood so far from the church of Long Horseley, that when rough weather and feeble health disabled Mrs. Cockburn from riding on horseback to attend the Sunday services, she was

constrained to stay at home, unless a still more distant neighbour, Mrs. Ogle, chanced to be in the country, and to give her a seat in her chaise and four, or her coach and six.

From the year of her marriage, 1708, until 1724, Mrs. Cockburn had published nothing. In the latter year she wrote her 'Letter to Dr. Holdsworth,' and having sent it to him, and received an elaborate controversial answer, she published her 'Letter' in January, 1727. To this Dr. Holdsworth publicly replied, and Mrs. Cockburn wrote an able rejoinder; but the booksellers not being willing to undertake its responsibility, the 'Vindication of Mr. Locke's Christian Principles from the injurious imputations of Dr. Holdsworth,' remained in manuscript until it was published among her collected works.

In 1732, while living at Aberdeen, she wrote the 'Verses occasioned by the Busts in the Queen's Hermitage,' which were printed in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for May 1737.

In August, 1743, her 'Remarks upon some Writers in the Controversy concerning the Foundation of Moral Duty and Obligation' were published in a serial called 'The History of the Works of the Learned.' These 'Remarks' were well received, and excited great admiration, and Mrs. Cockburn's friend, Dr. Sharp, archdeacon of Northumberland, having read them in manuscript, engaged her in an epistolary discussion on the subject of which they treat. The correspondence began August 8, 1743, and was concluded October 2, 1747.

Dr. Rutherford's 'Essay on the Nature and Obligations of Virtue' having appeared in 1744, her active mind was again aroused for public controversy, and in April 1747, her 'Remarks upon the Principles and Reasonings of Dr.

Rutherford's Essay on the Nature and Obligations of Virtue, in Vindication of the contrary Principles and Reasonings enforced in the Writings of the late Dr. Samuel Clarke,' were published with a preface by Bishop Warburton.

The extraordinary reputation acquired by this able work, suggested to some friends, who submitted the scheme to Lady Isabella Finch, the thought of raising a subscription for the republication of all Mrs. Cockburn's works, which the author herself undertook to edit. This plan was zealously supported by Mrs. Cockburn's fashionable and eminent friends, but uncontrollable circumstances prevented its full execution.

Mr. and Mrs. Cockburn had four children; a son and three daughters. A letter of advice to the former, written by his mother for his guidance in early manhood, is full of wisdom and piety. Religion, Employment, and Women, are the heads of her discourse. Under the second she says:—"Divinity is the profession you have been designed for from your birth; but let no views determine your choice to that sacred calling but a sincere desire of promoting the glory of God, and the salvation of men."

In subsequent letters to her niece, Mrs. Arbuthnot, Mrs. Cockburn often alludes to her "good son" with all the satisfaction of a happy mother. The heart of her husband safely trusted in her, and her children arose and called her blessed! In 1743 she lost one of her daughters. In January, 1749, she lost her husband. Under this severe shock her feeble health gave way, although her well-disciplined heart sustained it with perfect resignation; and on the 11th of May, 1749, Catherine Cockburn died. She was buried beside her husband and her youngest daughter, at Long Horseley, and on their tomb was inscribed, as suit-

able to each and all, one sentence altered from Proverbs xxxi. 31, "Let their own works praise them in the gates!"

Prefixed to her 'Fatal Friendship' are many sets of eulogistic verses addressed to the authoress; one by P. Harman, who also wrote the prologue; one by an anonymous writer, probably Lady Piers, 'To my much esteemed Friend,' in which are the lines:—

> "Your numbers flow as if the muses all
> Consulted nothing but their rise and fall."

Another set, also anonymous, exalts her praise above that of Orinda and Astrea, Catherine Philips and Aphara Behn, adding:—

> "More just applause is yours, who check the rage
> Of reigning vice, that has debauched the stage,
> And dare show virtue in a vicious age:"

and yet another, written by Mr. John Hughes, who hails her as "the first of stage reformers." The tragedy thus applauded does not contain a single line of real poetry, and does contain indecorous allusions, which would not be tolerated either on the stage or elsewhere in modern times. Hence may be inferred the low standard of poetry in the year 1698, and the gross profligacy of an age which reputed this play to be a corrective model of propriety. Yet the acknowledgment that human life is a state of probation, the assertion that good should be done, and evil resisted, runs through every scene: and the strength of principle which enabled a young girl publicly to maintain such opinions, in the face of rampant scepticism and general depravity, justly commanded respectful admiration.

The language is plain and unaffected, but occasionally deformed, after the colloquial fashion introduced at the Restoration, by the abbreviated words "'em" for them, &c.

The plot is commonplace, but well complicated, and it produces some good dramatic situations. The moral drawn at the conclusion is:—

"None know their strength, let the most resolute
Learn from this story to distrust themselves,
Nor think by fear the victory less sure;
Our greatest danger 's when we 're most secure."

This tragedy, having been deemed by contemporary critics the best of Catherine Trotter's dramatic compositions, leaves the reader little cause to join in Dr. Birch's regret that want of space enforced the omission of the four other plays from his edition of her works.

The best of her productions in verse is 'A Poem, occasioned by the Busts set up in the Queen's Hermitage, designed to be presented with a book in vindication of Mr. Locke, which was to have been inscribed to Her Majesty.' With considerable skill and persuasive sweetness she draws an argument from the honour done by Queen Caroline to the busts of Clarke, Locke, and Newton, and the patronage which Her Majesty had extended even to the lowly rural bard, Nicholas Duck, for the Queen's notice and protection to be granted to herself:—

"But not for such illustrious names alone
Has that choice seat her care of merit shown;
Shared by the most obscure, who greatly aim,
Struggling through all impediments to fame,
A daring bard she views, though deep distressed,
By art unaided, and by want depressed,
Whilst toils the day, and cares the night molest;
Yet snatching moments from those cares and toils
To court the muse, transported by her smiles."

* * * * *

"Oh, would the mighty queen once more descend
The low to raise, the fearful to defend;
Whom yet nor fears nor malice could avert
From daring injured merit to assert;
Though not the flail and sickle could retard,
Or cares discourage more the rural bard,
Than those restraints, which have our sex confined
By partial custom, check the soaring mind;
Learning denied us, we at random tread

Unbeaten paths that late to knowledge lead;
By secret steps, break through the obstructed way,
Nor dare acquirements gained by stealth display.
If some adventurous genius rare arise,
Who on exalted themes her talent tries,
She fears to give the work, though praised, a name,
And flies not more from infamy than fame."

* * * * *

"Oh, might I thus the blest occasion prove
Fair emulation in the sex to move!
Beholding one, who could but well design,
Protected thus by Royal Caroline,
Important is the boon, nor I alone,
The female world its influence would own
To approve themselves to thee, reform their taste,
No more their time in trifling pleasures waste,
In search of truths sublime, undaunted soar,
And the wide realms of science deep explore.
Quadrille should then resign the tyrant sway,
Which rules despotic, blending night with day;
Usurps on all the offices of life,
The duties of the mother, friend, and wife,
Learning, with milder reign, would more enlarge
Their powers, and aid those duties to discharge,
To nobler gain improve their vacant hours:
Be Newton, Clarke, and Locke their matadores,
Then, as this happy isle already vies
In arms with foes, in arts with her allies,
No more excelled in aught by Gallia's coast,
Our Albion too should of her Daciers boast."

Although much has been said and written about Locke by the ablest metaphysicians of his age, and of each succeeding generation, it may be questioned whether his own meaning in his own words has ever been more truly construed than by Mrs. Cockburn. What she wrote concerning his opinions during his life was approved by Locke himself; what she wrote of them after his decease was acknowledged to be correct by his most intimate associates, to whom he had frequently and familiarly expounded them.

Space cannot be afforded here for extracts of sufficient length to do justice to her controversial writings. The following show her style.

In the preface to her 'Letter to Dr. Holdsworth,' Mrs.

Cockburn says:—"The great zeal Mr. Locke showed for the conversion of deists, the serious veneration he expresses for the Divine Revelation, and (how little soever he was fond of particular systems) the care he took not to oppose any established articles of faith, make it a work worthy a sincere Christian to support his character against the injudiciousness of those who have reproached him as a Socinian heretic, an enemy, an underminer of religion. That there are no plain proofs from his writings to ground such a charge upon, is a sufficient foundation for this defence; but that he was certainly no Socinian, I am farther well assured by the authority of one who was intimate to his most private thoughts, and who is as eminent for his probity, as for the high station he at present possesses."

The person here alluded to was probably Lord King.

In a letter to her niece, dated "Long Horseley, September 29, 1748," Mrs. Cockburn says:—"I must own to you I am not myself satisfied, upon a review, of what Mr. Locke has said on moral relations. His plan led him to consider them only with reference to the present constitution of things; and, though he is very free from the charge of making the nature of morality uncertain, I fear he has given occasion to the interested scheme so much in fashion of late, but carried, I dare say, far beyond what he intended."

It is interesting to know Mrs. Cockburn's opinion of the most illustrious of all her contemporaries, Bishop Butler.

In letters to Mrs. Arbuthnot, written at Aberdeen, in 1738, she thus mentions him:—"He is a most judicious writer, has searched deeply into human nature, and is by some thought obscure; but he thinks with great clearness, and there needs only a deep attention to understand him perfectly."

"Whilst our modern moralists have contended to establish moral virtue, some on the moral sense alone, some on the essential difference and relations of things, and some on the sole will of God, they have all been deficient; for neither of those principles are sufficient exclusive of others, but all three together make an immoveable foundation for, and obligation to, moral practice; the moral sense, or conscience, and the essential difference of things discovering to us what the will of our Maker is."

"I have so great an opinion of the author of 'The Analogy,' that I no sooner saw it advertised than I made it my business to inquire after it, and procured the reading it twice. I think the design finely executed, especially in the first part, and all the objections of the deists very well obviated."

"That valuable performance, and several others that have come out within these few years, are of great use to satisfy and confirm the humble believer in his pious and just opinion, that God best knows by what means it is fit for him, in the wisdom of his government, to be reconciled to mankind."

In letters of subsequent date, Mrs. Cockburn repeatedly mentions Bishop Butler with a still deeper sense of the value of his writings. Dating from "Long Horseley, October 2, 1747," and again addressing Mrs. Arbuthnot, she says:—"I assure you there is not a sentence of that author's that I would not readily subscribe to, so perfectly I am satisfied with the whole tenor of his doctrine." This is an all-sufficient exposition of Mrs. Cockburn's theological opinions.

Much amazement has been expressed at the long suspension of Mrs. Cockburn's studies, and at her resuming her pen with accumulated power after it had lain unexercised

for the public during a period of sixteen or eighteen years. The commentators upon her works have certainly overstrained her own words on the first part of this subject, and drawn from them an unwarranted inference. Allowing the fact that she had during those years read few new books, yet she had undoubtedly possessed her Bible, the works of Shakspeare and Milton, of Lord Bacon, Cudworth, and Bishop Cumberland; and such an intellect as hers thus dieted while practically exercised in seclusion, became, like one of the Athletæ in training, all nerve and sinew, braced and animated for the noblest efforts. She had lived so long in the propulsive centre of British activity that, when sunk into obscurity, the gathering in of her reflections enriched her more than continued opportunities of observation would have done; and her fine faculties were kept so bright and keenly edged by constant use and friction, that they were available at call, either as ploughshares, sickles, or swords. No sooner has she harvested the fields of her little homestead, than she is found ready again for the lists of scholastic controversy. Her reasoning powers, her comprehensive knowledge, her acute discrimination, her steadfast love of truth, and her calm, clear, sense of right and wrong, always render her a formidable champion. Her eloquence has the force of manly argument, with the charm of feminine persuasion.

Her compositions have had their day, and fulfilled their appointed purpose. Let those persons who entertain any doubt of her extraordinary mental powers, turn for conviction to the 'Remarks upon some Writers of Controversy concerning the Foundation of Moral Virtue and Moral Obligation,' in Dr. Birch's edition of Mrs. Cockburn's 'Works,' vol. i., pp. 371-455, and to the 'Remarks,' &c.,

vol. ii., pp. 1-107. One of the best passages in Duncombe's 'Feminead' celebrates her memory:—

"But say what matron now walks musing forth
From the bleak mountains of her native north?
While round her brows two sisters of the Nine
Poetic wreaths with philosophic twine!
Hail, Cockburn, hail! even now from reason's bowers
Thy Locke delighted culls the choicest flowers
To deck his great, successful champion's head,
And Clarke expects thee in the laurel shade.
Though long to dark oblivious wants a prey,
Thy aged worth passed unperceived away,
Yet Scotland now shall ever boast thy fame,
While England mourns thy undistinguished name,
And views with wonder, in a female mind,
Philosopher, divine, and poet joined."*

* Pearch's Collection, vol. iv., p. 191.

CHAPTER X.

THE POETESSES.

A.D. 1750-1800.

Frances Duchess of Somerset — Elizabeth Tollet — Miss Pennington — Miss Farrer — Anne Viscountess Irwin — Anne Countess Temple — Anna Williams — Lady O'Neil — Susanna Blamire — Mary Robinson.

"By a cold region next the rider goes,
Where all lies covered in eternal snows,
Where no bright genius drives the chariot high,
To glitter on the ground and gild the sky;
Bleak, level realm, where frigid styles abound,
Where never yet a daring thought was found,
But counted feet is poetry defined
And starved conceits, that chill the reader's mind;
A little sense in many words imply,
And drag in loitering numbers slowly by." *

FRANCES DUCHESS OF SOMERSET.

FRANCES THYNNE was one of the two daughters and only children of the Hon. Henry Thynne, only son of Thomas, first Viscount Weymouth, and of Grace, daughter and heir of Sir George Strode. The year of her birth is not recorded by Walpole, nor in the peerages of Debrett or Burke. Together with her sister Mary, afterwards Lady Brooke, she was educated with great care under the immediate direction of her parents, and spent her early years at Longleat, where she formed a tender and enthusiastic

* 'Essay on the different Styles of Poetry,' by Dr. Parnell, Nichols's Collection, vol. iii., p. 221.

friendship with Mrs. Rowe, who was many years her senior.

She seems to have married about the year 1716, and the husband of her friends' selection proved happily the object of her true affection. He was Algernon Seymour, Earl of Hertford and Baron Percy. They had two children, a son George and a daughter Elizabeth.

The Countess was an exemplary wife and mother, and a model of virtuous conduct in the corrupt court of George II., where she held for several years the office of a lady of the bedchamber to Queen Caroline.

She had strong tendencies to literature, delighted in the unostentatious exercise of her own fine intellect, was the friend of Watts and Shenstone, and one of the earliest patronesses of Thomson. At her intercession the life of the profligate poet Savage was rescued from public execution; and she was ever ready either to assist the meritorious or to compassionate the wretched.

In 1744, she had the deep grief of losing her only son, a most promising and beautiful youth of nineteen, who died at Bologna, on his travels.

By the death of Charles, the proud Duke of Somerset, December 2, 1748, all the family honours of the Seymours and the Percys devolved upon her husband, the seventh Duke.

She was left a widow February 7, 1750, and died at Percy Lodge, Colnbrook, July 7, 1754.

She wrote the verses signed "Eusebia" in Dr. Watts's 'Miscellanies,' the letters signed "Cleora" in Mrs. Rowe's Works, and a set of verses to Mrs. Rowe's memory, signed "A Friend." Her correspondence with the Countess of Pomfret was edited by W. Bingley.

The following piece of poetry is a fair specimen of her style.

THE DYING CHRISTIAN'S HOPE.

"When faint and sinking to the shades of death,
I gasp with pain for every labouring breath,
Oh, may my soul, by some blest foretaste know
That she 's delivered from eternal woe!
May hope in Christ dispel each gloomy fear,
And thoughts like these my drooping spirits cheer:
What though my sins are of a crimson stain,
My Saviour's blood can wash me white again;
Though numerous as the twinkling stars they be,
Or sands along the margin of the sea;
Or as smooth pebbles on some beachy shore,
The mercies of the Almighty still are more;
He looks upon my soul with pitying eyes,
Sees all my fears, and listens to my cries;
He knows the frailty of each human breast,
What passions our unguarded hearts molest,
And for the sake of his dear, dying Son,
Will pardon all the ills that I have done!
Armed with so bright a hope, I shall not fear
To see my death hourly approach more near,
But, my faith strengthening as my life decays,
My dying breath shall mount to Heaven in praise."

Her praises have been sung by many admiring and grateful poets: by none more sweetly than by the Bard of the Seasons.

"Come, gentle Spring, ethereal mildness come,
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
While music wakes around, veiled in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.
Oh! Hertford, fitted or to shine in courts
With unaffected grace, or walk the plain
With innocence and meditation joined
In soft assemblage, listen to my song,
Which thy own season paints; when Nature all
Is blooming and benevolent like thee."*

ELIZABETH TOLLET.

Elizabeth, was the daughter and only child of George Tollet, Esq., a Commissioner of the Royal Navy, who, in right of his office, had a residence in the Tower of London. Sir Isaac Newton was a friend of Mr. Tollet's, and en-

* Commencement of Thomson's 'Spring.'

couraged the literary tendencies of his daughter. Nichols's 'Collection,' vol. vi., pp. 64-81, contains eight poetical pieces of hers; and to the same source we are indebted for the few particulars of her history which are here recorded. She appears to have led a tranquil and happy life, unvaried by any extraordinary incidents, and exempt from great afflictions. She inherited a competent fortune at her father's death, and died in 1754. All her writings advocated the cause of "Good manners, Virtue, and Religion." Her Latin verses have been highly praised by the annotator "D." in Nichols's 'Collection.'

None of her compositions were published until after her decease. Her English verses are distinguished by correct metre, sound sense, and extensive knowledge; though utterly void of imagination and scarcely irradiated even by a gleam of fancy. Some insight of her intellectual pursuits may be gained from the titles of her productions:

1. 'To Mr. Congreve on his Plays and Poems.' Here is the usual youthful love for poetry and the drama, evaporating in commonplace imitations of enthusiasm.

2. 'The Praise of Astronomy,' from Ovid's 'Fasti,' book i. Classical learning and scientific information have stimulated these verses. Miss Tollet was a good mathematician.

3. 'The Triumvirate of Poets.' A vain attempt to rival and surpass the vigorous lines of Dryden,—

"Three poets in three distant ages born," &c.

4. 'On Shakespeare's Monument,'—Unworthy of the feeling which prompted it.

5. 'On the Death of Sir Isaac Newton. Written on the Night of his Funeral, March 28, 1727.' Here she has done her very best to honour one whom she revered and loved, but only proved that she possessed a warm heart, well

disciplined feelings, a cultivated mind, and a poetic faculty unequal to her theme.

6. 'The Microcosm' indicates the comprehensive powers of her sound understanding and mathematical mind.

The 8th is entitled 'In Parmam Woodwardianam.'

The 7th, being one of the best and shortest, is annexed. The subject is that of Wordsworth's most celebrated sonnet. Her memory, well stored with historic facts, wanted the aid of vital energy to set them forth to proper advantage.

ON THE PROSPECT FROM WESTMINSTER BRIDGE – 1750.

"Cæsar, renowned in science and in war,
Look down awhile from thy maternal star;
See to the skies what sacred domes ascend,
What ample arches o'or the river bend;
What seats above in rural prospect lie,
Beneath, a street that intercepts the eye;
Where happy commerce glads the wealthy streams,
And floating castles ride. Is this the Thames?
The scene where brave Cassibelan of yore
Repulsed thy legions on a savage shore.
Britain, 't is true, was hard to overcome,
Or by the arms, or by the arts of Rome,
Yet we allowed thee ruler of the sphere,
But, last of all, resign thy Julian year."

These literary remains sufficiently prove that Elizabeth Tollet was a woman of rare capacity and great attainments. She understood the art of constructing poetry, although she did not possess the vitalizing spark of genius. Strength of character and independence of principle are manifested by the fact that her verses are altogether pure and unspotted by the bad moral atmosphere of her time. These valuable qualities must have conduced to social usefulness, and added dignity to her blameless and unostentatious character, while,—

"Along the cool sequestered vale of life
She kept the noiseless tenor of *her* way."

Miss Pennington.

In Nichols's 'Collection of Poems,' vol. vi., p. 27, may be found, in a note, some brief particulars of this young authoress. Her father was a clergyman and rector of Huntingdon. She died in the year 1759, at the age of twenty-five. Duncombe has eulogized her in his 'Feminead' for her 'Copper Farthing,' which was published in Dilly's 'Repository' for 1777, vol. i., p. 131.

Her 'Ode to a Thrush' is in Dodsley's 'Collection.' Her 'Ode to Morning,' 'Hail roseate Morn,' &c., and her 'Riddle,' 'Aurora, clad in rosy vest,' &c. are in Nichols's 'Collection,' vol. vi., p. 59, &c. 1780. Only the two last have been seen, by the present commentator, for they afford sufficient reason to believe that the others are not worth looking for. Her merits are wholly negative, consisting in irreproachable versification and inoffensive insipidity.

Miss Farrer.

The 'Censura Literaria,' vol. iv., p. 194, mentions this young lady as a neighbour and contemporary of Miss Pennington's, and inserts her 'Ode to Cynthia;' which deserves commendation for facility and sprightliness. Mr. Edwards, in Richardson's Correspondence, eulogizes her charming 'Ode on the Spring.' Its charms unfortunately are not perennial.

Anne Viscountess Irwin.

Anne, daughter of Charles Howard, third Earl of Carlisle, and wife, first of Richard Viscount Irwin, and afterwards of Colonel Douglas; is mentioned in the fifth volume of Park's edition of Walpole's 'Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors,' p. 155. She wrote 'A Character of

the Princess Elizabeth,' a sister of King George III., who died December 28, 1758; 'An Answer to some Verses of Lady M. W. Montagu's,' and 'A Poetical Epistle on Mr. Pope's Character of Women.' The latter poem is given there, but does not deserve reprinting. Lady Irwin died in the year 1760.

Anne Countess Temple.

Anne, daughter and coheir of Thomas Chambers, Esq., married, in the year 1737, Richard, first Earl Temple, and died April 8, 1777. Her collected Poems were printed by Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill, in 1764. Among them are several fables, one, 'The City and Country Mouse,' upon a subject which, at least twice before, had been so successfully treated by English poets that feebler aspirants should have forborne to touch it. Robert Henryson, a poet of the fifteenth century, treated it with admirable humour, and drew from it a moral of contentment with small possessions. Matthew Prior and Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, in concert, made use of it in ridicule of Dryden's 'Hind and Panther,' in their joint poem of the same title published in 1687.

Anna Williams.

Anna Williams was born in the year 1706: she was a native of South Wales, but even the Dictionary of 'Enwogian Cymrû,' which records her name, does not mention in what county or locality. Her father, Zachariah Williams, was a member of the medical profession, who greatly delighted in mathematical pursuits. Allured by the public offer of a large "parliamentary reward" for the discovery of an improved method of ascertaining the longitude, he left his home, his family, and professional connections, and

bringing with him a treatise on the subject, and an ingenious instrument invented by himself, came up to London in the year 1730. On laying his discoveries before the Commissioners, they were rejected as practically useless. Being consequently reduced to poverty, he was, in consideration of the sacrifices which he had made to the cause of scientific research, admitted as a pensioner at the Charter House. It does not appear at what time, or by what means Zachariah Williams first made the acquaintance of Dr. Samuel Johnson. Anna Williams, being left in Wales, had diligently carried on the work of self-culture, acquiring a knowledge of the French and Italian languages and of English literature. She suffered from the formation of cataracts in both eyes, and on her occasional visits to the metropolis to consult the most skilful oculist of the day, was received by Dr. and Mrs. Johnson and treated with the kindest hospitality. She excelled in needlework, both before and after her total loss of sight, and there is reason to believe that she used it as a means of subsistence. In 1746, probably incited by Dr. Johnson, and certainly assisted by some female friends in the manual part of the labour, Anna Williams translated the Life of the Emperor Julian from the French of La Blétrie.

In 1749, her father, Zachariah Williams, at the age of seventy-five, suffered expulsion from the Charter House for some infringement of its regulations. Having remonstrated in vain against this alleged injustice, he published in the same year a statement of his case, and an appeal to public opinion, which, unhappily for him, had not in those days such active promulgators and effectual enforcers as it now possesses.

In 1752, Dr. Johnson lost his wife, but Anna Williams coming up to London in the following year to be couched

for cataract, he nevertheless received her as before. The operation failed, and she became blind for life, yet Dr. Johnson's compassionate friendship gave the desolate woman a home, and secured for her the respectful attentions of all those persons who most loved and honoured him.

In 1755, Zachariah Williams published a book in English and Italian, entitled 'An Account of an Attempt to Ascertain the Longitude at Sea by an Exact Theory of the Magnetic Needle.' This was supposed to have been written by Dr. Johnson, and translated by Baretti. The Doctor placed a copy of the work in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and entered it upon the catalogue with his own hand.

Zachariah Williams died on the 12th of July, in the same year, at the age of eighty-two. He was one of the few mathematicians produced by the Principality of Wales —a land of orators, poets, and musicians. Dr. Johnson described him as "A man of industry indefatigable, of conversation inoffensive, patient of adversity and disease, eminently sober, temperate, and pious; worthy to have ended life with better fortune." * In the same eventful year, 1755, Mr. Garrick gave Anna Williams a benefit at his theatre, which produced a clear profit of 200*l.*

In 1758, when Dr. Johnson gave up his house in Gough-square, and went to Gray's Inn, Anna went into lodgings in Bolt-court, Fleet-street, where he, every night, took tea with her before he went home. To those quiet tea-drinkings, special favourites were occasionally allowed to accompany the Doctor. One night Boswell, before he was admitted to this privilege, describes Goldsmith as "strutting away, and calling to me with an air of superiority like that of an esoteric over an exoteric

* Boswell's 'Life of Johnson.'

disciple of a sage of antiquity, 'I go to Miss Williams!'" When Dr. Johnson again took a house, she had an apartment in it, and continued there as long as she lived.

In 1766, she published by subscription a volume, entitled 'Miscellanies in Prose and Verse,' which brought her in as clear profit the sum of 300*l.* Boswell terms her "a woman of more than ordinary talents and literature;" and relates that Dr. Johnson used to take her with him to dine at the houses of his friends, and would refuse their invitations if she preferred his remaining at home to dine with her alone.

Anna Williams was a woman of plain appearance and irritable temper, with a good understanding and benevolent heart. "Retaining her faculties to the very last," she died, as her best earthly friend has recorded, "from mere inanition," at his house in Bolt-court, Fleet-street, September 6, 1783, aged seventy-seven. He said of her, "She acted with prudence, and she bore with fortitude. She has left me!

'Thou thy weary task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.'

Had she had good humour and prompt elocution, her universal curiosity and comprehensive knowledge would have made her the delight of all that knew her."*

The welfare of her fellow-creatures was her predominant desire, and she ever delighted in furthering every plan which proposed so good an end; bequeathing at last all the little property she possessed to the Institution for Deserted Females, in the parish of St. Sepulchre's, London. Her verses are superficial and sentimental. Among the best are those—

* Boswell's 'Life of Johnson.'

ON A LADY SINGING.

"When Delia strikes the trembling string,
She charms our listening ears;
But when she joins her voice to sing
She emulates the spheres.

The feathered songsters round her throng,
And catch the soothing notes;
To imitate her matchless song
They strain their little throats.

The constant, mournful, cooing doves,
Attentive to her strain,
All mindful of their tender loves,
By listening soothe their pain.

Soft were the notes by Orpheus played,
Which once recalled his bride,
But had he sung like thee, fair maid,
The nymph had scarcely died."

It may commonly be depended on as a test of true or false taste and feeling for music, that real appreciation seldom adopts an imperceptible and unrealized object of comparison. That Delia "emulates the spheres" is indeed mere negative praise; that her voice had more charms than the lyre of Orpheus, may be taken as a general preference of vocal to instrumental music; but the birds attempting to imitate her song, and the doves more especially represented as soothed by it, is a better thought, and was probably suggested by the presence of exhilarated canaries and tame turtles in captivity.

LADY O'NIEL.

Henrietta, only daughter of Charles Boyle Viscount Dungarvon, eldest son of John, fifth Earl of Cork, was born in the year 1758. On the 15th October, 1777, she married John O'Niel, Esq., who was, in 1793, created Baron O'Niel. The account of her life in Park's 'Walpole' is more than commonly meagre, and the date of her decease is not given either there or in any of the Peerages

where it has been sought. It appears from Charlotte Smith's verses to her memory, that she died in 1794. Her friendship for that sweet poetess has been the means of preserving two elegant though morbid little pieces of her own.

ODE—TO THE POPPY.

"Not for the promise of the labour'd field,
Not for the good the yellow harvests yield,
I bend at Ceres' shrine;
For dull, to human eyes, appear
The golden glories of the year,
Alas! a melancholy worship's mine.

I hail the goddess for her scarlet flower;
Thou brilliant weed,
That does so far exceed
The richest gifts gay Flora can bestow;
Heedless I pass'd thee, in life's morning hour,
(Thou comforter of woe)
Till sorrow taught me to confess thy power.

In early days, when Fancy cheats,
A varied wreath I wove,
Of laughing Spring's luxuriant sweets,
To deck ungrateful Love:
The rose, or thorn, my labours crown'd;
As Venus smiled, or Venus frown'd;
But Love and Joy, and all their train, are flown;
Even languid Hope no more is mine,
And I will sing of thee alone,
Unless, perchance, the attributes of Grief,
The cypress bud, and willow leaf,
Their pale funereal foliage blend with thine.

Hail, lovely blossom!—thou canst ease
The wretched victims of disease;
Canst close those weary eyes in gentle sleep,
Which never open but to weep;
For, oh! thy potent charm
Can agonizing pain disarm;
Expel imperious Memory from her seat,
And bid the throbbing heart forget to beat.

Soul-soothing plant! that can such blessings give,
By thee the mourner bears to live;
By thee the hopeless die!
Oh! ever 'friendly to despair,'
Might sorrow's pallid votary dare,
Without a crime, that remedy implore,
Which bids the spirit from its bondage fly,
I'd court thy palliative aid no more;

No more I'd sue that thou should'st spread,
Thy spell around my aching head,
But would conjure thee to impart
Thy balsam for a broken heart;
And by thy soft Lethean power,
(Inestimable flower)
Burst these terrestrial bonds, and other regions try."

WRITTEN BY THE SAME LADY ON SEEING HER TWO SONS AT PLAY.

'Sweet age of bless'd delusion! blooming boys,
Ah! revel long in childhood's thoughtless joys,
With light and pliant spirits, that can stoop
To follow, sportively, the rolling hoop;
To watch the sleeping top with gay delight,
Or mark, with raptured gaze, the sailing kite;
Or, eagerly pursuing pleasure's call,
Can find it center'd in the bounding ball.
Alas! the day *will* come, when sports like these
Must lose their magic, and their power to please;
Too swiftly fled, the rosy hours of youth
Shall yield their fairy charms to mournful truth;
Even now, a mother's fond prophetic fear
Sees the dark train of human ills appear;
Views various fortune for each lovely child,
Storms for the bold, and anguish for the mild;
Beholds already those expressive eyes
Beam a sad certainty of future sighs;
And dreads each suffering those dear breasts may know,
In their long passage through a world of woe;
Perchance predestined every pang to prove,
That treacherous friends inflict, or faithless love;
For, ah! how few have found existence sweet,
Where grief is sure, but happiness deceit."

VERSES BY CHARLOTTE SMITH.

On the death of LADY O'NIEL, written in September, 1794.

"Like a poor ghost the night I seek;
Its hollow winds repeat my sighs;
The cold dews mingle on my cheek
With tears that wander from mine eyes.

The thorns that still my couch molest,
Have robb'd these heavy eyes of sleep;
But though deprived of tranquil rest,
I here at last am free to weep.

Twelve times the moon, that rises red
O'er yon tall wood of shadowy pine,
Has fill'd her orb, since low was laid
My Harriet! that sweet form of thine!
While each sad month, as slow it pass'd,
Brought some new sorrow to deplore;
Some grief more poignant than the last,
But thou canst calm those griefs no more.
No more thy friendship soothes to rest
This wearied spirit tempest-toss'd;
The cares that weigh upon my breast
Are doubly felt since thou art lost.
Bright visions of ideal grace
That the young poet's dreams inflame,
Were not more lovely than thy face;
Were not more perfect than thy frame.
Wit, that no sufferings could impair,
Was thine, and thine those mental powers
Of force to chase the fiends that tear
From Fancy's hands her budding flowers.
O'er what, my angel friend, thou wert,
Dejected Memory loves to mourn;
Regretting still that tender heart,
Now withering in a distant urn.
But ere that wood of shadowy pine
Twelve times shall yon full orb behold,
This sickening heart, that bleeds for thine,
My Harriet!—may like thine be cold!"

To the same beloved friend Charlotte Smith had some years before addressed her 37th sonnet.

Susanna Blamire.

Considering the Lowland Scotch dialect to be merely English in a very behindhand condition, the name of Susan Blamire is here introduced, as belonging to a woman capable of producing poetry in the language of any country with which she might have chanced to become familiar. She was descended from an old English north country family, and born at her paternal home, Cardew Hall, near Carlisle, in the year 1747. Her first productions appear to have been some ballads in the local dialect of her native region.

Her sister having married Colonel Graham, of Duchray, Perthshire, Miss Blamire accompanied them to his home, and resided there with them for several years, delighting herself with the music, the legends, and the poetry of Scotland.

She died unmarried, at Carlisle, in 1794. Her poems were published in 1842, with a memoir, by Patrick Maxwell.

THE NABOB.

"When silent Time, wi' lightly foot,
Had trod on thirty years,
I sought again my native land,
Wi' mony hopes and fears.
Wha kens gin the dear friends I left
May still continue mine?
Or gin I e'er again shall taste
The joys I left langsyne?

As I drew near my ancient pile,
My heart beat a' the way,
Ilk place I passed seemed yet to speak
O' some dear former day;
Those days that followed me afar,
Those happy days o' mine,
Whilk made me think the present joys
A' nothing to langsyne.

The ivied tower now met my eye,
Where minstrels used to blaw;
Nae friend stepped forth wi' open hand,
Nae weel kenned face I saw,
'Till Donald tottered to the door,
Wham I left in his prime,
And grat to see the lad return,
He bore about langsyne.

I ran to ilka dear friend's room,
As if to find them there,
I knew where ilk ane used to sit,
And hung o'er many a chair;
Till soft remembrance threw a veil
Across these e'en o' mine,
I closed the door, and sobbed aloud,
To think on auld langsyne.

Some pensy chiels, a new sprung race,
Wad next their welcome pay,
Wha shuddered at my Gothic wa's
And wished my groves away.

'Cut, cut,' they cried, 'those aged elms,
Lay low yon mournfu' pine,'
Na! na! our fathers' names grow there,
Memorials o' langsyne.

To wean me frae these waefu' thoughts,
They took me to the toun,
But sair on ilka weel-kenned face
I missed the youthfu' bloom.
At balls they pointed to a nymph
Wham a' declared divine,
But sure her mother's blushing cheeks
Were fairer far langsyne.

In vain I sought in music's sound
To find that magic art,
Which oft in Scotland's ancient lays
Has thrilled through a' my heart.
The sang had mony an artfu' turn,
My ear confessed 'twas fine,
But missed the simple melody
I listened to langsyne.

Ye sons to comrades o' my youth,
Forgie an auld man's spleen,
Wha midst your gayest scenes still mourns
The days he ance has seen.
When time has passed and seasons fled,
Your hearts will feel like mine;
And aye the sang will maist delight
That minds ye o' langsyne."

Mary Robinson.

Mary Darby was of obscure birth, and a native of the city of Bristol. When very young she married a Mr. Robinson, the illegitimate son of Mr. Thomas Harris of Tregunter, in the parish of Talgarth, Breconshire. To the exquisite scenery around that lovely retreat, and to her solitary readings and musings there, she attributes in her memoir those graces of manner, and that taste for literature which subsequently added fresh charms to her personal advantages.

Her husband having brought her to London, she went upon the stage in order to increase their small income. Here her extraordinary beauty soon rendered her at once

famous and infamous in the character of Shakspeare's 'Perdita.'

Under the signature of 'Laura Maria,' she wrote for the magazines in the style of the Della Cruscan rhymers; she also published the novel of 'Vancenza,' and two volumes of her collected poems.

She died in poverty at a cottage on Englefield Green, December 26, 1800, at the age of forty. Her autobiography and literary remains were afterwards published for the benefit of her only child, a daughter. Her writings are not devoid of talent or of sentiment. The following is a specimen of her verse:—

SONNET TO TIME.

"Insatiate Despot! whose resistless arm,
Shatters the loftiest fabric from its base;
And tears from beauty ev'ry magic charm,
And robs proud nature of her loveliest grace.

Still art thou kind, for as thy pow'r prevails,
And age comes onward, menacing decay;
As warmth expires, and numbing frost assails,
And life's faint lamp presents a quiv'ring ray;

'Tis thine to reconcile the tranquil breast,
To prove that sublunary joys are vain;
To turn from pomp, and all its tinsel train,
And seek the silent paths of mental rest:
So, from the deadliest poison chymic art,
Extracts a healing balm to tranquillize the heart."

CHAPTER XI.

THE POETESSES.

A.D. 1800-1806.

Caroline Symmons — Elizabeth Carter — Charlotte Smith.

'The Muse instructed a well-nurtured train
Of abler votaries to cleanse the stain,
And claim the palm for purity of song."
COWPER'S 'Table Talk.'

CAROLINE SYMMONS.

THE third volume of the 'Censura Literaria' makes mention of this promising young girl, who was the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Symmons, author of a Life of Milton. She died June 1, 1803, at the age of fourteen. When only twelve years old she wrote 'The Flower Girl,' which was first published by Archdeacon Wrangham with his poem of 'The Raising of Jairus's Daughter,' in 1804, accompanied by a brief memoir of the authoress. A genuine talent for versification, and a mind capable of realizing the situation of others and entering into their feelings, appear in these verses, superficial and juvenile as they are:—

THE FLOWER GIRL.

"Come buy my wood harebells, my cowslips come buy,
Oh, take my carnations and jessamines sweet,
Lest their beauties should wither, their perfume should die,
Ah, snatched like myself from their native retreat.

Oh ye, who in pleasure and luxury live,
Whose bosoms would sink beneath half my sad woes.
Ah, deign to my cry a kind answer to give,
And shed a soft tear for the fate of poor Rose.

Yet once were my days happy, sweet, and serene,
And once have I tasted the balm of repose;
But now on my cheek meagre famine is seen,
And anguish prevails in the bosom of Rose.

Then buy my wood harebells, my cowslips come buy,
Oh, take my carnations and jessamines sweet,
Lest their beauties should wither, their perfume should die,
Ah, snatched like myself from their native retreat."

Elizabeth Carter.

No woman was ever placed, from first to last, in circumstances more favourable to the calm and easy gratification of literary tendencies, more beloved and honoured for her mental acquirements and moral qualities, or more amply and gratuitously rewarded for the social benefits which she conferred, than Elizabeth Carter. Her father was the Rev. Nicholas Carter, D.D., perpetual curate of Deal. Her mother, his first wife, was the only daughter of Richard Swayne, Esq., of Bere, in Dorsetshire. She was their eldest daughter, and born at Deal, Dec. 16, 1717.

Dr. Carter himself undertook the labour of educating his numerous children, imparting to boys and girls alike instructions in the Latin and Greek languages. The mind of his eldest daughter was so dull and slow of apprehension, that he almost despaired of ever making her a scholar, and would have given up the attempt if her resolute and indefatigable perseverance as a child had not struggled incessantly against all obstacles. To be good and to be learned were the earliest objects of her ambition, and with unabated energy she steadfastly pursued them through life. She could never acquire grammar as a rudimentary theory, but after having attained great proficiency in the Greek and Latin languages, she deduced

their principles of composition from their literature. She also studied Hebrew with great success. In order to assist the acquirement of French, her father sent her to board for a year in the family of M. Le Seur, a refugee minister at Canterbury, where she learned both to understand and to speak it with facility. She subsequently applied herself to Italian, Spanish, German, and Portuguese, and very late in life she learned enough of Arabic to read it without a dictionary.

Being naturally heavy, and resolved to reclaim time from sleep for the prosecution of her studies, she had recourse to snuff, and was never able to break herself of the habit of taking it. Over application, and the abridgment of the measure of rest required by her constitution, brought on intense headaches, to which she remained subject through life. Time and practical use gave brightness and power to her faculties; she had naturally a sound understanding, and her taste for literature was formed upon the finest models, while an early introduction to the best society added the suavities and refinements of manner and habits, to which her gentle and delicate character spontaneously inclined.

Her earliest attempts at literary composition were in verse. Dr. Carter was well acquainted with Mr. Cave, the publisher; in whose fourth volume of 'The Gentleman's Magazine,' she published several pieces, under the signature of "Eliza," when she was only sixteen years of age. Visiting London occasionally with her father, she was introduced by Mr. Cave to many literary persons, and among the rest to Dr. Johnson, soon after his first settling down there in the year 1737. In 1738 she published an anonymous collection of her poems, including those which had been previously printed in 'The Gentleman's Maga-

zine.' In 1739, she translated and published, with notes, the criticism of Crousaz on Pope's 'Essay on Man,' and Algarotti's 'Explanation of Newton's Philosophy.'

It is always interesting to observe the communication of the sacred fires of poetry and of piety. At the torch of Elizabeth Rowe, the young Elizabeth Carter enkindled hers. In the lines on Philomela's death, she says —

> "Fixed on my soul shall thy example grow,
> And be my genius and my guide below."

The amiable Countess of Hertford, true to her beloved friend Mrs. Rowe, in death as well as in life, rewarded the young aspirant's eulogy with her friendship and correspondence. Elizabeth Carter's difficulties were all confined to her books of private study; she met with no discouragements from the outer world.

Matthew Robinson, Esq., of Rokeby, had married the heiress of the Drakes of Horton, near Hythe; and their eldest daughter Elizabeth, born in 1720, who spent a great part of her childhood there, was early attracted by sympathy of feeling and similarity of pursuits towards her young contemporary and neighbour, Elizabeth Carter. A close friendship was formed between them, which lasted to the end of their long lives. In the year 1742, Elizabeth Robinson married Edward Montagu, Esq., a grandson of the second Earl of Sandwich; and subsequently to that event, Elizabeth Carter often visited Mrs. Montagu at her country seat at Sandleford and at her house in London, the celebrated resort of persons of the highest rank and most conspicuous talents.

Her translations were approved, her verses were applauded by Burke, Dr. Johnson, Savage, and Baratier; and she found her society courted by many whom the world deemed it an honour to know.

In 1741 began her intimacy with Catherine Talbot, which became a mutual blessing, for they cherished each other's faculties, virtues, and piety. Through Miss Talbot and her mother she made the acquaintance of Dr. Secker, with whom they resided. He was then Bishop of Oxford, and was raised, in 1758, to the Archbishopric of Canterbury.

Early in the year 1749, she commenced her translation of Epictetus, which she submitted sheet by sheet to Dr. Secker's revisal. She finished the Disquisitions in December, 1752, but at his suggestion added the Enchiridion and Fragments, with an introduction and notes; and a subscription having been got up by him and her other wealthy and influential friends, the work was published in 1758, and brought her in a clear profit of 1000*l.* This translation has passed through three editions, and still maintains a high reputation in our standard literature. While occupied in preparing the first edition for the press, Miss Carter was fulfilling the still more onerous task of preparing her youngest brother for the University of Cambridge. Her pupil did her credit, for he entered Bennet College in 1756, passed through his course of study with distinction, and finally became incumbent of Little Wittenham, Berkshire.

No one ever learned, from more pleasing experience, the truth embodied in Madame de Staël's aphorism:—"Quand le talent littéraire peut inspirer à ceux qui ne nous connaissent point encore, du penchant à nous aimer, c'est le présent du ciel dont on recueille les plus doux fruits sur la terre." *

The equability of her mind was maintained by well-

* When literary talent inspires those to whom we are as yet unknown with an inclination to love us, then is it the gift of heaven, from which we gather the sweetest of all earthly fruits.—'L'Allemagne,' vol. ii., chap. xxx.

balanced acquisitions. She carefully studied astronomy, and the geography of ancient history. Her nephew and biographer informs us "that she was literally better acquainted with the meanderings of the Peneus and the course of the Illissus, than she was with those of the Thames or Loire; and could give a better account of the wanderings of Ulysses and Æneas, than she could of the voyages and discoveries of Cook or Bougainville." She learned to play upon the spinnet and upon the German flute, was particularly fond of dancing in her youth, and of a rubber at whist all her life long. She drew tolerably well, made herself thoroughly acquainted with every department of household economy, delighted greatly in gardening, and more especially in the culture of flowers, and constantly occupied her leisure or social hours with plain needle-work. With the hope of counteracting the bad effects of over-study, she habituated herself to taking very long walks, and indulged in attendance upon social parties. Her placid and cheerful benevolence won the affection both of old and young, although increasing deafness, as age drew on, reduced general conversation, for her, to the mere passive spectatorship of the gesticulations in a pantomime. She never married, and adopted the matronly designation of Mrs., after the manner of a preceding generation.

Her father having lost his second wife, and his other children being all settled in homes of their own, Mrs. Carter bought a house at Deal, in the year 1762, to which the venerable old man removed as a harbour of rest. She managed the household, and provided in the most minute particulars for his hourly comfort. They had their separate libraries, and spent their studious hours apart, meeting cheerfully at meals, and spending their evenings together

during periods of six months. The other half of the year she usually passed in London, or in visiting her friends at their country houses.

At the suggestion of the Earl of Bath (Pulteney), who took great delight in her conversation and writings, Mrs. Carter published another volume of poems in 1762, to which "the good Lord Lyttleton" (then Sir George) contributed a poetical introduction.

In 1763, she accompanied the Earl of Bath and Mr. and Mrs. Montagu on a continental tour. They crossed the Channel to Calais, visited the Spa, passed down the Rhine, and, travelling through Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, and Dunkirk to Calais, re-crossed to Dover, after an absence of nearly four months. In the summer of 1764, Lord Bath died; and as he made no mention of Elizabeth Carter in his will, the ultimate heir to his property, Sir William Johnson Pulteney, spontaneously settled upon her an annuity of 100*l.*, which he soon afterwards augmented to 150*l.*, urged only by the promptings of his own generous heart, and grateful consideration for the worthy friend who had solaced his noble predecessor's declining days.

In August, 1768, she lost her kind friend Archbishop Secker, between whose amiable character and her own there existed many points of resemblance. In November, 1769, she lost her attached friend Miss Sutton; and in the same year experienced the severest trial of her life, in watching the progress of that agonizing and hopeless disease which deprived her of Catherine Talbot, the best beloved of her many dear ones, on the 9th of January, 1770. Her own elegant pen has thus delineated this accomplished and excellent woman:—"Never, surely, was there a more perfect pattern of evangelical goodness, decorated by all the ornaments of a highly improved under-

standing, and recommended by a sweetness of temper and an elegance of manners of a peculiar and more engaging kind than in any other character I ever knew."

In the same year that she lost this dear friend, Elizabeth Carter edited and published a volume of Miss Talbot's papers, under the title of 'Reflections on the Seven Days of the Week;' and subsequently two volumes of 'Essays and Poems.' These works of Catherine Talbot went through seven editions in the course of the next five-and-twenty years, and were highly esteemed for the elevated purity of their moral tone, and for the gracefulness of their diction. There is in them sufficient likeness to the writings of C. C. Sturm to give probability to the thought that they originated from thence.

Mrs. Elizabeth Carter's biographer has given to the world a liberal selection from her thirty years' correspondence with Catherine Talbot, and her correspondence with Mrs. Agmondesham Vesey between the years 1763 and 1787, in two quarto volumes. All Mrs. Carter's letters are remarkable for correct, perspicuous, and appropriate language; for soundness of judgment, moderation of spirit, deep sincerity, and pervading piety. Her cheerful placidity of disposition gives gentle life to all her sentiments and opinions, but in her occasional expressions of buoyant gaiety there is always something awkward, forced, and exaggerated.

Mrs. Vesey's letters are those of a good-natured creature who has fallen into scepticism because she will try to reason and has faculties unfitted for the process, and because she too dearly loves this visible world. Those of Catherine Talbot are in every respect the best, full of natural vivacity and chastened thought.

With the exception of a few poems, one volume of

ethical philosophy translated from the Greek, one of carping criticism from the French, and one of attenuated science from the Italian, it is remarkable that all Elizabeth Carter's accumulated stores of erudition exhaled away in conversation and familiar letters. This fact may excite our regret that her powers found not wider exercise; but it must also attest the genuineness of that love for learning which led her from infancy even to extreme old age to apply herself with unremitting labour to fresh studies. The laurels which she won in youth were those which adorn her tomb. Excepting the tribute to Miss Talbot's memory, and the re-editing of her own poems at the call of her publishers, she published nothing after Dr. Secker's death, and never sought an anti-climax to her one great success in Epictetus.

All Mrs. Carter's griefs were those of deprivation, and in 1774, inevitable death parted her from the good and venerable father, whose home she had shared from her birth. In the full possession of all his faculties, excepting only a slight deficiency in the sense of hearing, he passed away in his eighty-seventh year. A small accession of fortune fell to her at his decease.

In 1775, Mrs. Montagu lost her husband, and entered upon the independent possession of a large property. Among her first acts of beneficence on this occasion was her assignment to her early friend, Elizabeth Carter, of an annuity of 100*l.* Mrs. Underwood, a family connection of the Carters, afterwards bequeathed to her an annuity of 40*l.*; and Mrs. Talbot dying in 1783, left her the sum of 200*l.* as a legacy.

Thus, with little labour for the public and no anxiety, Elizabeth Carter attained to literary fame, and found herself possessed, by means which she could never have

anticipated, of a secure and ample income for the supply of all her simple wants and moderate wishes.

In 1782, at the desire of her kind friend, Sir W. J. Pulteney, she accompanied his daughter to Paris, but she returned home in sixteen days, and limited her after journeys to British ground.

She was repeatedly honoured at Deal with visits from various members of the royal family, who did themselves credit by this homage paid to extraordinary learning and exemplary piety. The Queen, who had long been accustomed to ask her opinion upon books, through ladies of the court, at last, in 1791, commanded her attendance at Cremorne House, where the translator of Epictetus was formally presented and received with the highest favour.

In 1796, Mrs. Carter had a dangerous illness, from which she never thoroughly recovered. She continued, however, to exert herself in visiting the poor, in the establishment and maintenance of charitable institutions, and in shedding the influences of her benevolent spirit over the high circles of society in which she moved.

In the year 1800, she lost by death her faithful friend Mrs. Montagu, at the age of eighty; three years her junior. Their correspondence, from 1755 to 1799, was published after Mrs. Carter's death by her nephew, Mr. Pennington.

On the 19th of February, 1806, after a long period of gradually increasing weakness, the gentle, serene, and saintly spirit of Elizabeth Carter left its mortal tenement for the world of light and life. She expired at her lodgings in Clarges Street, Piccadilly.

Her sound and comprehensive mind, highly cultured as it was, could produce nothing contemptible: but it wanted that essential qualification of the true poet, active originality, the power of conceiving, and of shaping new conceptions.

The following poem is a favourable specimen of her style. Its aptness to adhere to the memory proves the regularity of its numbers, and the well graduated succession of its thoughts.

THE EVENING WALK.

"How sweet the calm of this sequester'd shore,
Where ebbing waters musically roll;
And solitude and silent eve restore
The philosophic temper of the soul.

The sighing gale, whose murmurs lull to rest
The busy tumult of declining day,
To sympathetic quiet soothes the breast,
And ev'ry wild emotion dies away.

Farewell, the objects of diurnal care,
Your task be ended with the setting sun;
Let all be undisturb'd vacation here,
While o'er yon wave ascends the peaceful moon.

What beauteous visions o'er the soften'd heart
In this still moment all their charms diffuse,
Serener joys and brighter hopes impart,
And cheer the soul with more than mortal views.

Here faithful Mem'ry wakens all her pow'rs,
She bids her fair ideal forms ascend,
And quick to ev'ry gladden'd thought restores
The social virtue and the absent friend.

Come, ..., come, and with me share,
The sober pleasures of this solemn scene;
While no rude tempest clouds the ruffled air,
But all, like thee, is smiling and serene.

Come, while the cool, the solitary hours
Each foolish care, and giddy wish control,
With all thy soft persuasion's wonted pow'rs,
Beyond the stars transport my listening soul.

Oft when the earth detained by empty show,
Thy voice has taught the trifler how to rise,
Taught her to look with scorn on things below,
And seek her better portion in the skies.

Come, and the sacred eloquence repeat:
The world shall vanish at its gentle sound,
Angelic forms shall visit this retreat,
And opening Heaven diffuse its glories round."

Charlotte Smith.

The poet's bleak and dreary traject through this world is often like that of the traveller who, treading Arctic snow, leaves a rose-coloured track behind him. One of the most melancholy among female biographies is that of Charlotte Smith, not because of its unfortunate incidents, but because, while her fine genius found therein invigorating exercise, her heart never learned the sweet "uses of adversity."

She was the daughter of Mr. Nicholas Turner, of Stoke, near Guildford, in Surrey, and of Bignor Park, on the banks of the Arun, in Sussex. At the latter residence she was born, on the 4th of May in the year 1749.

Her mother died when she was an infant, and an aunt who presided over the family endeavoured to check little Charlotte's predilection for books. She was instructed in the usual showy knowledge and accomplishments of a gentlewoman, and excelled in everything she undertook; but in spite of all obstacles poetry became her favourite pursuit, and the local traditions of her neighbourhood served to cherish her love for it; for Otway and Collins had haunted its woods and downs.

From the time that she attained her twelfth year, she occasionally resided in London with her father and the family, and there her eager thirst for knowledge was gratified by enlarged opportunities of observation, conversation, and instruction.

Her father held a partnership in a mercantile house, in conjunction with a Mr. Smith, who was also one of the Directors of the East India Company. Mr. Turner intending to give his children a stepmother, Charlotte was led, by the desire of escaping from such control, to take

the advice of some ill-judging relations and accept the offered hand of Mr. Smith's eldest son before she was sixteen years of age, her husband being five years her senior, though much inferior in discretion. At first, the young couple had a house in London, but the society of the east end was ill-suited to the refinement of her taste, and several children soon increasing her household cares, she readily acceded to her husband's wish to withdraw to a suburban villa, and subsequently to remove from thence into the country.

The elder Mr. Smith, indulging his son's wayward preference for rural occupations, purchased and presented to him a farm called the Lys, situated in Hampshire, and thither the young family went, full of new hopes and new projects. A lively, active fool is harder to guide than even a dull and dogged one. Her husband possessed in a high degree the art of self-delusion, and unfortunately believed himself to possess extraordinary abilities for farming. He consequently entered upon speculative agriculture with a bold and lavish hand, indulging meanwhile in an expensive household and habits of convivial hospitality, and looking forward to imaginary profits to make his income commensurate with his extravagant outlay.

His prudent wife remonstrated in vain, and in the prospect of impending ruin soothed her anxieties by the composition of poetry. "When in the beech-woods of Hampshire," she says, "I first struck the chords of the melancholy lyre, its notes were never intended for the public ear; it was unaffected sorrow drew them forth. I wrote mournfully because I was unhappy."

In 1776, the elder Mr. Smith died, leaving a voluminous and inexplicable will, which only effectually provided for the expenditure of the greater part of his large fortune

throughout long years of litigation, by encouraging trustees and agents to oppose the claims of the legatees.

The husband of Charlotte Smith having been selected to serve as High Sheriff for his county, the expenses attendant upon the office produced a crisis in his affairs and caused him to be imprisoned for debt in the King's Bench. Thither his faithful wife accompanied him; she spent near him, and in assiduous attendance upon him, the whole term of his seven months' incarceration, and during the latter part of it she shared his captivity. Having at last, by her successful arrangement of his affairs, procured his liberation, she enjoyed the gratification of returning with him to her paternal home, and has thus recorded her feelings on the occasion:—

"It was on the 2nd day of July that we commenced our journey. For more than a month I had shared the restraint of my husband in a prison, amidst scenes of misery, of vice, and even of terror. Two attempts had since my last residence among them been made by the prisoners to procure their liberation, by blowing up the walls of the house. Throughout the night appointed for this enterprise I remained dressed, watching at the window, and expecting every moment to witness contention and bloodshed, or perhaps to be overwhelmed by the projected explosion. After such scenes and such apprehensions how deliciously soothing to my wearied spirits was the soft, pure air of the summer's morning, breathing over the dewy grass, as (having slept one night on the road) we passed over the heaths of Surrey, and my native hills at length burst upon my view! I beheld once more the fields where I had passed my happiest days, and amidst the perfumed turf with which one of those fields was strewn, perceived with delight the beloved group from

whom I had been so long divided, and for whose fate my affections were ever anxious. The transports of this meeting were too much for my exhausted spirits. After all my sufferings I began to hope I might taste content, or experience at least a respite from my calamities."

This passage would be beautiful but for the use of the affected term "perfumed turf" instead of hay.

While a sojourner in the King's Bench Prison, she had prepared a volume of her poems for publication. On offering it to Dodsley he rejected it at a glance. Through her brother's intervention it was then offered to Dilly, who also refused to take it. She therefore had it printed at Chichester, with a dedication to her friend Mr. Hayley, dated May 10th, 1784. A second edition was called for in the course of the same year.

Mr. Smith, having been made aware that some other creditors intended to arrest him, escaped to France, accompanied by his wife, who soon returned to England with the hope of arranging his affairs. Failing to effect that object, she took her children back with her to France, and hiring an old castle in Normandy spent the winter there with her husband.

The next year she again came to England, and succeeded at last in making arrangements with the creditors which enabled her husband to return. They then tenanted an old mansion-house at Wolbeding, in Sussex, the parish of which Otway's father had once been rector. Here she wrote the sonnets to the river Arun—"On thy wild banks," &c.

Being distressed for money she now translated a novel from the French of the Abbé Prevost, and also a selection of extraordinary stories from 'Les Causes Célèbres,' which she published under the title of 'The Romance of Real Life.' Imprudence and debt soon exiled her husband a

second time, and Charlotte Smith then removed with her children to a cottage in the same county, where she assiduously renewed her literary labours.

Pope has said,—

> "True ease of manner suits but ill with art,
> Or flowing numbers with a bleeding heart."

This, like most of his other axioms, is fallacious, for some of the most natural and fluent lines of British poetry have resulted from elaborate correction, and some of the sweetest verbal melodies in all languages have been produced under the subsiding emotions of grief.

Charlotte Smith, in her quiet place of retreat, prepared and published an enlarged edition of her sonnets, and proceeded to compose a series of prose fictions. In 1788, she produced her 'Emmeline, or The Orphan of the Castle,' and, encouraged by its great success, she followed it up with 'Ethelinde' in 1789, with 'Celestina' in 1792, and with 'Desmond' in 1793. This last-named novel, advocating the republican and irreligious opinions held by the first French revolutionists, shocked the awakened conscience of the English public, and tended to impair the popularity which her former writings had acquired. She soon retrieved this mistake, and not only regained the favour of all readers of romantic fiction but raised her literary reputation to its highest point by the production of 'The Old Manor House' in 1793. Part of this admirable novel was written at Eartham, while she was the guest of Hayley, and Cowper also was sharing his hospitable kindness. Of an evening she used to read aloud to them what she had composed during the day, and she found in the two critics admiring auditors. Her sweet voice and excellent elocution are said to have enhanced the graces of her diction.

Her next novel was called 'The Wanderings of Warwick,' then came 'The Banished Man,' and in 1795, 'Montalbert;'

in 1796, she produced 'Marchmont;' in 1798, 'The Young Philosopher,' and subsequently 'The Solitary Wanderer,' making in all thirty-eight volumes.

She also wrote and published, for the use of young persons, the 'Rural Walks,' 'Rambles Farther,' 'Minor Morals,' and 'Conversations,' which had been suggested to her mind by the instructions she imparted to her own children. Like all books practically adapted to individual children hers proved widely useful, and long stood the test of time.

She afterwards published a poem called 'The Emigrant,' and a second volume of sonnets concluded the long list of her self-edited works.

Through all these years of diligent application to literature, her mind was incessantly harassed by the perplexities and privations attendant upon making a provision for her children, by the ever-recurring follies and wants of her husband, and by the expensive litigation carried on with the trustees of her father-in-law's will.

Her eldest son obtained a writership in the East India Company's service at Bengal; the second died young; the third died also in youth, of a fever; the fourth held an ensign's commission in the 24th Regiment, and lost a leg at the siege of Dunkirk. In the preface to the second volume of her sonnets, she mentions her four elder sons as "all seeking in other climates the competence denied them in this," and states that two were "driven from their prospects in the church to the army" by the unjust detention from them of their share in their grandfather's property; complains that the means of a suitable education for her youngest son are denied her by the "inhuman trustees," and bewails the death of "the loveliest and most beloved of her daughters."

Both volumes of her sonnets were published by subscription, and brought in handsome profits. The success of

these, and the still greater success of her prose works, furnished her with the means of maintenance and of educating and providing for her numerous children. The personal friendship of many eminent and estimable individuals, won for her by those literary productions, she valued as the dearest solace of her sorrows. Several of her sonnets are addressed to the Hon. Mrs. O'Niel, the most beloved and intimate of them all.

In March 1806, her wretched husband died in a gaol, and on the 28th of the following October, Charlotte Smith's careworn heart ceased to beat. She expired at Telford, near Farnham, in Surrey.

A volume of her posthumous poems was published by her representatives.

She was a good wife, a tender mother, an affectionate friend, and in all respects an upright and honourable woman. Her character combined those rare associates—delicate fineness of perception and infrangible strength of purpose. Untaught in her infancy to pray to Our Father who is in Heaven, the sacred fire of devotion was never enkindled upon the altar of her heart to shed its healthful warmth and gladdening light from within, and transmute all evils into good. Her natural disposition was lively and gay,

> "*She* like a scattered seed at random sown,
> Was left to spring by vigour of her own,"

and far outgrew the ordinary standard of well cultivated female minds. She made herself familiarly acquainted with the poets, historians, and writers of polite literature of her own country, and of her own and the next preceding generation, with the language and poetry of Italy, and with the language and general literature of France. She applied herself also to the study of such sciences as explain the phenomena of the earth, air, and sky, and took peculiar interest in natural history. She

drew skilfully, and was fond of using her pencil in the delineation of botanical specimens.

Of the classic authors she seems to have known only what might be gathered by the ear from the conversation of scholars, or caught from the occasional allusions of English poetry. In her seventy-third sonnet she says,

"Wilt thou yet murmur at a misplaced leaf?"

and in a note refers to "a story, I know not where told, of a fastidious being," &c., showing utter ignorance of the effeminacy of the Sybarites. Well had it been for her had she known as little of Goëthe's 'Sorrows of Werter,' and of the writings of Rousseau as she did of the ancient Greeks!

Discontent was the bane of her happiness. Viewing this world only as a day for enjoyment, the next world merely as a night for repose, she rebelled against troubles and trials as unjust inflictions, not discerning their probationary use, in the preparation of human character for an immortal and heavenly life. Misfortunes soured and embittered her feelings; they even narrowed and warped her noble mind.

Few women have ever possessed greater advantages of capacity and ability, of acquirement and influence. Her faculties were of no common kind. Her mind had naturally great scope, comprising the high imaginative power of an inborn poet, with the accuracy of detail and sound common sense which constitute the woman of business and worldly wisdom. To her belonged also that attribute of noble natures, pervading sincerity; the thoughts and feelings of her every-day existence being the opinions and sentiments of her prose and poetry. There is that charm in her poetry which belongs only to genius. The tone is too monotonous, the spirit too querulous; it wants the exulting and exalting notes of the caroller who soars to

the skies and dwells blissfully in the turf, yet it has a sort of ravishment like the nightingale's strains, ever pleasing though plaintive.

ON THE DEPARTURE OF THE NIGHTINGALE.

"Sweet poet of the woods—a long adieu!
Farewell, soft minstrel of the early year!
Ah! 't will be long ere thou shalt sing anew,
And pour thy music on 'the night's dull ear.'
Whether on Spring thy wandering flights await,
Or whether silent in our groves you dwell,
The pensive muse shall own thee for her mate,
And still protect the song she loves so well.
With cautious step, the love-lorn youth shall glide
Thro' the lone brake that shades thy mossy nest:
And shepherd girls from eyes profane shall hide
The gentle bird, who sings of pity best:
For still thy voice shall soft affections move,
And still be dear to sorrow and to love!"

TO SPRING.

"Again the wood and long-withdrawing vale
In many a tint of tender green are drest,
Where the young leaves, unfolding, scarce conceal
Beneath their early shade, the half-formed nest
Of finch or woodlark; and the primrose pale,
And lavish cowslip, wildly scatter'd round,
Give their sweet spirits to the sighing gale.
Ah! season of delight!—could aught be found
To soothe awhile the tortured bosom's pain,
Of Sorrow's rankling shaft to cure the wound,
And bring life's first delusions once again,
'T were surely met in thee!—thy prospect fair,
Thy sounds of harmony, thy balmy air,
Have power to cure all sadness—but despair."

TO FORTITUDE.

"Nymph of the rock! whose dauntless spirit braves
The beating storm, and bitter winds that howl
Round thy cold breast; and hear'st the bursting waves,
And the deep thunder with unshaken soul;
Oh come!—and show how vain the cares that press
On my weak bosom—and how little worth
Is the false fleeting meteor, Happiness,
That still misleads the wanderers of the earth!

Strengthened by thee, this heart shall cease to melt
O'er ills that poor humanity must bear;
Nor friends estranged, or ties dissolved be felt
To leave regret, and fruitless anguish there:
And when at length it heaves its latest sigh,
Thou and mild Hope shall teach me how to die."

THE GOSSAMER.

"O'er faded heath-flowers spun, or thorny furze,
The filmy Gossamer is lightly spread;
Waving in every sighing air that stirs,
As Fairy fingers had enwtined the thread:
A thousand trembling orbs of lucid dew
Spangle the texture of the fairy loom,
As if soft Sylphs, lamenting as they flew,
Had wept departed Summer's transient bloom:
But the wind rises, and the turf receives
The glittering web:—So, evanescent, fade
Bright views that Youth with sanguine heart, believes:
So vanish schemes of bliss, by Fancy made;
Which, fragile as the fleeting dreams of morn,
Leave but the wither'd heath, and barren thorn!"

In her 35th sonnet (To FORTITUDE) there is a tone which reveals how sublimely she might have learned to triumph over earth-born cares, had she applied to the right source for strength. Her versification is always graceful and always melodious, though sometimes languid and too full of quoted lines.

The following little poem indicates her knowledge of botanic localities, and of the writings of Linnæus. It has peculiar interest as affording a comparison with one written upon the same subject by Felicia Hemans.

FLORA'S HOROLOGE.

"In every copse and sheltered dell,
Unveiled to the observant eye,
Are faithful monitors who tell
How pass the hours and seasons by.

The green-robed children of the Spring
Will mark the periods as they pass,
Mingle with leaves Time's feathered wing,
And bind with flowers his silent glass.

Mark where transparent waters glide,
Soft flowing o'er their tranquil bed;
There, cradled on the dimpling tide,
Nymphea rests her lovely head.

But, conscious of the earliest beam,
She rises from her humid nest,
And sees reflected in the stream,
The virgin whiteness of her breast;

Till the bright day-star to the west
Declines, in ocean's surge to lave,
Then, folded in her modest vest,
She slumbers on the rocking wave.

See Hieracium's various tribe,
Of plumy seed and radiate flowers,
The course of Time their blooms describe
And wake or sleep appointed hours.

Broad o'er its imbricated cup,
The Goatsbeard spreads its golden rays,
But shuts its cautious petals up,
Retreating from the noon-tide blaze.

Pale as a pensive cloistered nun,
The Bethlem Star her face unveils,
When o'er the mountain peers the sun,
But shades it from the vesper gales.

Among the loose and arid sands,
The humble Arenaria creeps,
Slowly the purple star expands,
But soon within its calyx sleeps.

And those small bells so lightly rayed
With young Aurora's rosy hue,
Are to the noontide sun displayed,
But shut their plaits against the dew.

On upland slopes, the shepherds mark
The hour, when as the dial true,
Cichorium to the towering lark
Lifts her soft eye, serenely blue.

And thou, 'Wee crimson-tipped flower,'
Gatherest thy fringed mantle round
Thy bosom at the closing hour,
When night-drops bathe the turfy ground.

Unlike Silene, who declines
The garish noontide's blazing light,
But when the evening crescent shines
Gives all her sweetness to the night.

Thus in each flower and simple bell
That in our path betrodden lie,
Are sweet remembrancers who tell
How fast their winged moments fly."

The admirable merit of her prose fictions is indisputable. She excels in descriptions of nature, but always keeps her scenery in subservience to her personages. Her stories are not usually remarkable for skilful complications, but they excite that sort of interest which events derive from being related by one who has taken part in them. Great experience of life, keen observation, and satiric wit, flash forth from every page. There is nothing strikingly original in her characters, but they all have the air of real human beings, speaking so naturally as to sustain our eager interest, feeling so keenly as to touch our tearful sympathies, thinking so erroneously and so despondingly as to cause a sort of contemptuous compassion to blend with our just admiration of her extraordinary abilities.

Her novels seem to have been composed and printed in great haste, bearing evident marks of negligence in the construction of sentences, and being so full of verbal mistakes as to suggest the probability that the manuscripts were scarcely legible, and that she had never corrected the proof-sheets.

CHAPTER XII.

THE POETESSES.

A.D. 1806-1810.

Hannah Cowley — Anna Seward — Mary Tighe.

"Diverse voci fanno dolci note."
DANTE, 'Dell Paradiso,' vi. 124.

"Of diverse voices is sweet music made."
CARY'S Translation, Canto 6, line 127.

HANNAH COWLEY,

THE greatest of our female comic-dramatists, was the daughter of Mr. Philip Parkhouse, a well educated and intelligent bookseller, and born in 1743, at Tiverton, in Devonshire. The poet Gay was their kinsman, and perhaps his fame stimulated Mr. Parkhouse's inclination towards learning, and increased the pride and pleasure which he felt in cultivating the precocious abilities of his shy and gentle daughter. She imbibed his knowledge from conversation rather than by any regular course of instruction, for which she had no aptitude. Had she been a person of high birth, and lived in Tudor times, she would have left behind no fame of mastered languages and operose translations, but rather would have expended her vivacious fancy wholly in diffusing domestic cheerfulness, and in the invention of masques and pageants.

At twenty-five years of age Hannah Parkhouse married

Captain Cowley, an amiable and well-educated man, and went with him to reside in London. She did not often attend stage performances, but sitting one night at the theatre with her husband, and noticing his lively interest in the play which was being represented, she became suddenly conscious of her own dramatic power, and exclaimed, "So delighted with this? Why, I could write as well myself!" He smiled incredulously, for she had attained the age of thirty-three and given no tokens of likelihood.

The next morning she wrote a sketch of the first act of her 'Runaway,' which effectually convinced her husband of her ability. She rapidly completed the comedy; it was favourably received by Mr. Garrick, brought upon the stage, and acted with such distinguished success, that her reputation as a comic-dramatist became at once established. This proved to be the last play which the English Roscius ever superintended. On its first representation the part of Emily was performed by Mrs. Siddons, whose wonderful tragic powers had not yet been recognized by a London audience. This comedy is much better adapted for acting than for reading. Its moral merit is negative, for in a licentious age, when ceremonious manners veiled very thinly gross and prevalent immoralities, she dared both in thought and word to be delicate and modest, and is reprehensible only for her too ardent descriptions of lawful love. The exaggerated and bombastic manner of making it is copied from the fashion of the times. The tragedy of 'Albina' seems to have been her next composition, as it is said to have been placed in the hands of Mr. Garrick immediately after he had quitted the stage, which he did in 1776. It was produced at the Haymarket Theatre in 1779, and met with a certain measure of success. The

plot is well suited for stage effect: the tone moral and chivalrous. The blank verse is of the worst kind, having no proper rhythm, and scarcely an attempt at it, beyond a few passages imitated from some inflated speeches of Shakspeare. It is designed to illustrate the passion of envy, and fulfils its purpose. In the same year, 1779, her comedy, called 'Who's the Dupe?' was brought out at Drury Lane Theatre, and met with great applause. For this play her father, at her request, furnished her "with Greek to laugh at." Even in reading, the effect of the author's buoyant humour is so exhilarating that the heart must be sad indeed which cannot share its merriment; and upon the stage its irresistible drollery insured its popularity; in spite of the splenetic critics, who censured it as farce-like, although framed from those constituent elements of college seclusion and town intercourse, which must offer a lively contrast in any civilized age.

In 1780, Mrs. Cowley reached the zenith of her dramatic course in 'The Belle's Stratagem.' This admirable comedy was brought out at Covent Garden Theatre, and received with the highest favour. When printed it was dedicated by special permission to Queen Charlotte; and that discreet reformer of the British Court, with her royal spouse, King George III., continued to patronise that spirited comedy as long as they attended theatrical performances. It has stood the test of time, and won a place among the standard dramas of the country; establishing the right of Hannah Cowley to have her name enrolled among those of the ablest comic writers of her period, Goldsmith and Macklin, Cumberland, Colman, and Sheridan.

At the same theatre, two years afterwards, her comedy of 'Which is the Man?' was warmly welcomed, although far below the 'Belle's Stratagem' in merit. Her whimsical

and clever comedy, entitled 'A Bold Stroke for a Husband,' achieved a triumph in 1783, which was only secondary to that of 'The Belle's Stratagem.' The beautiful Mrs. Robinson was the Victoria of its first series of representations.

In 1783, her beloved husband left her to join his regiment in Bengal, and she soothed the pains of absence by writing the sprightly comedy of 'More Ways than One,' which was successfully acted at Covent Garden Theatre in that year, and published with a dedication to him.

In 1786, her 'School for Grey-beards' came out at Drury Lane. Part of the plot of this comedy was taken by a friend from an old play and given to her to be worked out. It is said to be the only one of her eleven successful dramas which did not wholly spring from her own fertile fancy. The first Donna Seraphina in this piece was Miss Farren; the first Don Henry, Mr. J. P. Kemble.

In 1788, her 'Fate of Sparta' came out at Drury Lane. It is founded on the well-known history of Leonidas and Cleombrotus, and the filial and conjugal duty of Chelonice. On the first representation the part of the heroine was performed by Mrs. Siddons. The stage situations are striking, the diction is better, and the metre more exact than those of 'Albina;' but this second tragedy, though not a failure, tended to establish the fact, that the ability of Mrs. Cowley was essentially comic.

In 1792, her comedy, called 'A Day in Turkey,' full of lively dialogue, and of exciting incidents for stage effect, was successfully brought out at Covent Garden.

In 1795, her comedy of 'The Town before You,' appeared at the same theatre, and closed an almost unparalleled series of dramatic successes.

It is remarkable that most of the prologues and epilogues of her plays were written by herself. She had a peculiar turn for such compositions, and conformably to an aphorism which was probably unknown to her, that "prepossession of mind requires preface of speech," she exercised an instinctive faculty not only for preparing the temper of an audience to listen favourably, but also for inciting them to crown her efforts with acceptance and applause. She evidently had learned all that she best knew from experience, and from a sort of unintentional observation of surrounding life and conversation. In her comedies she described the manners she saw, wrote the phrases she heard, and invented with original and untaught skill, out of materials acquired she knew not how, all the complexities and varieties of plots and pleasant dialogues. In the characters her scope is not wide, and her favourites reappear with different names in all; more especially the sprightly, elegant, and virtuous woman of fashion, highly cultivated, yet natural and spontaneous, self-possessed, and "mistress of her whole situation." Probably the idea of this dramatic personage was caught from the innocent and airy bearing of some lady of her acquaintance. Her celebrity must have won many fashionable patronesses, the graces of polished society were congenial to her taste, and she could throw herself successfully into any ideal form. Perhaps a recollection of Molière's Clarinda might influence this conception, and certainly the fascinations of a Younge and a Farren conduced to the effect, if not to the production of these charming heroines.

The preface to her 'Collected Works,' 3 vols. 8vo., 1813, gives a very meagre account of her life, and of the development and working of her mind. It states, however, that "she was accustomed to say that she always succeeded

best when she herself did not know what she was going to do, and suffered the plot to grow under her pen."

It is added—"In her plays posterity may, perhaps, find as complete specimens as will reach them of English colloquy towards the close of the eighteenth century, and of manners as characteristic of the day as the style of the elder dramatists is of theirs."

This is most true; even the ungrammatical phrase, "You was," constantly occurs in her comedies; and all contemporary literature proves that she rightly delineated the people of her generation. She excelled in sketching and colouring surfaces; the ripples, light waves, and little weirs of the social stream, she traced with admirable skill; but the ocean depths of thought and feeling lay far beyond her sounding-lead, and consequently her tragedies were worthless, and her poems inane.

In confessing that she was the Anna Matilda who corresponded with Mr. Merry, under his signature of Della Crusca, the style of her poetry is announced, and declaration made, that her verses are mere artificial compositions, devoid of real bardic inspiration. In the language of conversation, whether grave or gay, sentimental or satirical, Mrs. Cowley is invariably fluent; but when she leaves the causeway of ordinary life for the airy mountain regions of poetry, she loses her power, wants apt thoughts, apt words, and all the true graces of diction, while, retaining an unfortunate facility wholly verbose, she pours forth reversed sentences and turgid phrases in unequal and inharmonious measures. In her comedies all is easy and natural, in her tragedies and poems all is distorted and bombastic; and her darling epithet, *tortuous*, exactly expresses the effect of such poetasting upon her readers.

She never was fond of reading, but preferred travels to

any other books, as they suited the habit of superficial observation, which was congenial to her mind. Her memory was not remarkably tenacious, but it served to illustrate her own lines:—

> "What others gain by study hard,
> Flows in upon the musing bard,
> A word, the slightest hint will do,
> To bring all knowledge in review."

In poetry, however, be the subject what it may, those illustrations and enhancements are needed which only a rich memory can pour forth from its treasures; and consequently there the poverty of an unstored mind must be helplessly laid open. In a collateral line with her dramatic triumphs runs the series of her once admired poems. In 1780, she published the first part and a fragment of the second part of her tale in blank verse called 'The Maid of Arragon.' The story is as ill-concocted as the verse: nothing more silly could be devised than the heroine's conduct, in going out alone by moonlight, encountering an utter stranger, telling him the secret which involved her own and her father's life and liberty, and discovering too late, that this insidious new acquaintance is a suborned traitor, who has come there on purpose to make them captives.

In 1786, she wrote 'The Scottish Village,' which, being in rhymed iambics, has a little more order, if not more rhythm, than her blank verse; but her notion of poetry seemed to be comprised in a fettered, cramped, and deformed style of ordinary English. No sooner does she begin to write verse, than all is "mellifluous," "tortuous," and Della Cruscan. In 'The Scottish Village,' her praise of her contemporaries, Miss Seward, Mrs. Barbauld, and Miss Burney, evinces a heart free from envy and full of generous enthusiasm.

Her 'Elegy on a Field of Battle' contains a few good lines. For instance;—

"Ah, wayward Fancy bids dread scenes revive,
Which Time's dark mists had veiled from mortal ken;
Embattled squadrons rush as when alive,
And shadowy falchions gleam o'er shadowy men!"

Dryden appears to have been her poetical model, and well selected in one particular; for there was, alike in the imitated and the imitator, an essentially prosaic element; but she unfortunately adds the want of energy to his deplorable want of sentiment. The harmony of her versification improves chronologically, but she was incapable of attaining the full and free command of a poetic lyre of any form or size.

The home occupations of her 'Edwina the Huntress,' are those of the fine ladies of Mrs. Cowley's own days.

"Her needle's skill made tenderest flowerets blow,
Which now in sweet festoons around her glow;
In cooling grots her shell-work seized the eye,
With skill arranged to show each blending dye;
The age's taste her garden well displayed,
Her vivid fancy each parterre arrayed,
Here yews in shape of solid walls she reared,
Or there a dreary castle they appeared;
In box the eagle hovered o'er its nest,
Or couchant lions seemed resigned to rest."

The fair Edwina's field-sports, however, differed essentially from those of Mrs. Cowley's time:—

"For her the hawking party was prepared,
She roused the wolf, the foaming boar she chased,
And danger's self was in her presence graced."

The following lines, from the third book of 'The Siege of Acre,' afford a favourable specimen of Mrs. Cowley's descriptive poetry:—

"Soft twilight's gentle mission came in vain,
No more the signal now to quit the plain,
And soon the night her shades more thickly threw
And hid creation from the tortured view.

But raging battle gives its own dread light,
From roofs on fire, flames flash upon the sight,
Amidst the vast of sable ether soar
The dismal dirges of the cannon's roar,
In flames sent forth in curving flight shells glow,
And Death's own beams his frequent murders show.
The sea's black surges catch the lurid lay,
And every billow foams with fiery spray,
Here waves terrific drown the cannon's roar,
Sinuous roll along and sparkle up the shore;
There mounts of aqueous flame arrest the sight,
And ocean heaves its Heclas on the night;
Now, on their points, the vessels seem to burn,
Or down abysses dark to overturn,
Unquenched the glowing masts again aspire,
The men ascending ropes of tortuous fire.
On shore, the palms deception lift in air,
And branchy sycamores unhurtful glare;
Quick floods of flame bring out each darkened hill,
Their rough contours with transient radiance fill,
And gleam down every slope, point every line,
And each sharp ridge with pencilled fire define:
They pierce the gloom which hovered o'er the slain,
Revealing those who lay convulsed with pain.
Here showing men who heave with doubtful life,
There, where last agonies have closed the strife.
The moans of pain are floating through the air,
The shrieks of torture, groans of deep despair.
That scene excites too torturous a sigh,
Where as men kill, they 're slain, by others who must die."

This is her most ambitious and elaborate poem, and was written in or about the year 1799. It acquired great popularity from the historic interest of the subject and the fame of its hero, Sir Sydney Smith; nevertheless, its animation is merely galvanic, and possesses none of the real attributes of continuous life.

Mrs. Cowley was a woman of retired habits, and of unaffected and agreeable manners. Her happiness was in her home; she dearly loved her parents, her husband, and her four children, and liked the quiet occupations of painting and sculpture. Just before the outbreak of the first French Revolution, she spent a year in France for the benefit of her daughter's education. In 1797, she became

a widow; and in 1801, she left the great metropolis, which had been so long her place of abode, and returned to spend the remainder of her life at Tiverton, her native town. She had run ambition's course, and won its wreaths. Contented and thankful for the past, she now aspired to a higher and immortal prize.

Her 'Summons to Painting,' her 'Epistle Remonstrative,' and her 'Fireside Tour,' are easy and lively pieces of verse, which derive their interest almost entirely from the intimations they afford of her habits of life in her latter years. They show her taking an active part in the society of the town and neighbourhood, making and receiving morning visits, attending evening assemblies, chatting with the friends of her childhood, revising her works for reprinting, and gardening with all the alacrity of health and happiness.

'The Emigration of the House of Braganza,' a poem suggested by the event which occurred in 1807, was one of her last compositions.

She had never suffered from serious illness until early in the year 1808, when her constitution began gradually to break up; and, discerning the approaching end, she looked forward with tranquil hope to immortality. The last verses she ever wrote were entitled 'A Petition after Thaw-flood,' and prefixed to a subscription paper in behalf of a poor man whose property had been destroyed by the inundation. He obtained thereby compensation for his losses. On the 10th of March, 1809, she was busy in her garden planting flowers: the next morning, for the first time, she felt too ill to leave her bed; and on the evening of the same day, Saturday, the 11th, she peacefully expired at the age of sixty-six.

Anne Seward,

'The Swan of Lichfield,' 'The Inventress of Epic Elegy,' the idol of her circle, and one of the most admired beauties and writers of her day, was born at the rectory of Eyam in Derbyshire, amid the wonderful scenery of the Peak, and near the manufacturing town of Sheffield, renowned for its cutlery. In the Biographical Preface to Sir Walter Scott's edition of her 'Poems and Juvenile Letters,' he states distinctly that she was born in the year 1747, without mentioning the month or day; and in these particulars his statement has been copied by all the numerous authorities consulted by the writer of the present work. A passage in one of those letters mentions that on the 12th of the preceding December she bade farewell "to the soft and musically sounding teens;" thus fixing her birthday, and suggesting by its place in her correspondence, that she must have attained her twentieth year long before 1767. The essayist consequently wrote to Eyam to ascertain the truth, and received from the present obliging rector a copy of the following entry in the parochial Register: "1742, December 24, baptised Anne, the daughter of the Rev. Thomas Seward, rector of Eyam, and Mrs. Elizabeth Seward, his wife." Her father was a man of independent fortune, a prebendary of Salisbury, and canon residentiary of Lichfield. He was a poet, and some of his verses were published in the second volume of Dodsley's Collection. He edited, in 1750, an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's Plays, which was for many years afterwards considered the best in existence. Her mother was the daughter of the Rev. William Hunter, head-master of the Lichfield Grammar-school, and famous for the celebrity of his pupils, Samuel Johnson and David Garrick.

Mr. and Mrs. Seward had several daughters, and one of them, named Jane, was baptised in July 1747, and doubtless born in that year, usually assigned to her sister Anne: they had also a son, but all their children died in infancy, excepting the poetess, and Sarah, who was baptised at Eyam in April, 1744. In the year 1754, the family removed to the Bishop's palace at Lichfield, which became their life-long home; but Anne, or Anna as she called herself, the "Nancy" of her parents' fireside, frequently accompanied in after years the sojournings of her father at Eyam; of which he continued the incumbent for a period of fifty years. Her apprehension being quick, and her memory retentive, her father took pleasure in teaching her to recite passages from the works of Shakspeare and Milton. These authors, Dryden and Pope, Prior and Young, were the first with whose poetry she became conversant; and the four last exercised a durable influence upon her mind. Before she had attained the age of ten years, she manifested her imitative faculty in verse, and diligently availed herself of every opportunity of gratifying her thirst for knowledge. The avidity with which, in succeeding years, she received her father's instructions, excited his fears lest his beautiful girl should grow up a learned woman, he therefore prohibited poetry and scholastic studies. With affectionate submission to his will, Anna ceased from her favourite pursuits, and diligently applied herself to strictly feminine accomplishments, in which, and more especially in ornamental needlework, she attained great proficiency.

A still harder trial attended her youth; and her self-government, strong principles of duty, and filial attachment enabled her so to triumph over the temptations of a first love, in spite of her impetuous temper, that the

respect of her parents henceforth increased their affection for her, and won them to withdraw the prohibition against literature. The clergy of the cathedral, who were her father's friends and visitors, took almost paternal pride and pleasure in her abilities; and she renewed her studies, aided by them and by Dr. Darwin, not merely without further impediment, but with perhaps too strong an impulsion of uniform applause.

Mr. Richard Lovel Edgeworth has insinuated in his Autobiography that Miss Seward had been the rival of the first Mrs. Darwin for the doctor's addresses. This is effectually contradicted by the fact that Dr. Darwin married Miss Howard of the Close, Lichfield, in the year 1757, when Anna Seward was only fifteen years of age.

Her early letters, 1762-8, in the collection edited by Sir Walter Scott, are published in a curtailed form: all of them are entertaining, and some of them deeply interesting: the style is neither inverted nor affected, and many original remarks which they contain are pertinent, penetrating, and sagacious.

In her literary criticisms, there is always some isolated remark or other which indicates acute discrimination; but prepossession and prejudice had so perverted her reasoning powers, that her judgment can never be relied upon in balancing the merits and demerits of any particular book, or in comparing the compositions of one author with those of another. In proof of this assertion may be cited her preference of the 'Caractacus' and the 'Elfrida' of Mason to the 'Samson Agonistes' of Milton.

She reckoned among her friends almost all the poets and rhymers of her times, and she regarded them all with such affectionate partiality as to lavish commendation and real admiration upon all their productions whether good,

indifferent, or contemptible. She disliked Dr. Johnson for his despotic manners, and Richard Lovel Edgeworth for his opposing self-conceit; but her antipathies were few, and her friendships numerous, generous, and enthusiastic. Contemporary merit never failed to obtain her applause, and she was ever ready to assist necessitous authors both with her influence and with her purse.

In 1764, her sister Sarah having entered into a matrimonial engagement with Mr. Porter, a merchant of Leghorn, the step-son of Dr. Johnson, Anna Seward had promised to accompany them to Italy, and was employed in preparations for the wedding and the journey, when the betrothed bride was suddenly seized with a fever, which terminated her life in a few days. Under this affliction, Anna Seward's warmth of heart enabled her to afford great consolation to her bereaved parents, while she was herself upheld by the assiduous and tender cares of the young Honora Sneyd. Time having softened the grief of Mr. Porter, he gradually transferred his affection to the surviving sister, whose conversation was his best resource and solace; but Anna Seward rejected his addresses, and knowing her society to be indispensable to her parents' happiness, resolved never to leave them. For their sakes, in subsequent years, she refused many advantageous offers of marriage; contenting herself with the triumphs which her beauty, her talents, and her spirit of ascendancy, enabled her to obtain in local society; and with the public celebrity acquired by her writings while verifying the remark of Madame de Staël: "Le génie poétique est une disposition intérieure, de la même nature que celle qui rend capable d'un généreux sacrifice."* (Poetic genius is an internal disposition of the same nature as that

* L'Allemagne : 'De la Poésie.'

which renders one capable of a generous sacrifice.) In the case of Miss Seward, however, the word *feeling* would be more appropriate than *genius*.

In the year 1778, Anne, Countess of Northesk, wife of George the sixth Earl, was led by the medical reputation of Dr. Darwin to sojourn for some time at Lichfield. She was suffering from a dangerous malady which had baffled the skill of all the most celebrated physicians in London; and Dr. Darwin's acuteness and ingenuity were stimulated to the utmost by the desire to prolong the life of a most amiable woman, and to obtain a triumph over his professional brethren. At his request, the Countess and one of her daughters, who had accompanied her to Lichfield, became inmates of his house, where they received the most judicious and kind attentions from Mrs. Darwin, and from her intimate friend Miss Seward, whose humane feelings were deeply touched by the imminent peril of a life so precious to a husband and a large family of children. The engaging manners of the Countess, and her gratitude for Anna Seward's devoting her time and talents to the solace of her sufferings, increased to enthusiasm the sympathy of the poetess. One day, in speaking of the invalid, Dr. Darwin said that a thought had occurred to him, that the operation of the transfusion of blood into her veins from those of a healthy human being might probably conduce to her cure. Anna Seward, in perfect health and the prime of life, instantly volunteered to be bled for the supply.

Inability to obtain mechanical instruments of sufficient delicacy caused the Doctor to relinquish the project; but the Countess, deeply affected by the offered self-sacrifice of her friend, repaid her generous intention with affectionate attachment. By other means, Dr. Darwin succeeded in

restoring her health; Lady Northesk returned to her happy home in Scotland, and soon sent Miss Seward a set of fine pebbles as a present. They continued to correspond by letter during the few remaining years of the Countess's life, which was unfortunately terminated by an accident: her clothes caught fire, and thus she perished. It would appear that after the death of her sister, and the alienating marriage of Honora Sneyd, Anna Seward had no other confidential friend than her parents. She consequently formed the habit of making her poems the depositaries of her best thoughts and feelings, and of diffusing her opinions in letters. The admiration bestowed upon her verses in society encouraged her to venture upon the publication of some of them in the Magazines. The 'Elegy on Captain Cook,' who was massacred at Owhyhee on Valentine's-day in the year 1779, has real and permanent interest, conveys much historic truth, some very curious information, and a great deal of humane and amiable sentiment, in harmonious verse. A redundance of glittering ornaments and an absurd excess of personification spoil the effect, for even—

"Shipwreck guards the land!"

The 'Monody on Major André,' who died heroically a traitor's death at Tappan, October 2, 1780, possesses sufficient merit to account for its having been adopted as the expression of a nation's grief, at a period when the whole British army wore mourning for his death, and all Europe deplored and stigmatized his fate. Miss Seward had known him when a boy, and personal regret gave earnestness to her poem: for he was the lover of the beautiful Honora Sneyd, who was brought up by Mr. and Mrs. Seward, and fondly regarded by their

daughters. One of the best couplets relates to the French people, who, under their King Louis XVI., encouraged the revolt of the Anglo-American States:—

> "Unnatural compact! Shall a race of slaves
> Sustain the ponderous standard Freedom waves?"

The incessant and indiscriminating use of personification deforms and spoils the Monody. Thus certain spectators—

> "Through rolling years, saw undecisive War
> Drag *bleeding Wisdom* at his iron car!"

In 1780, Mrs. Seward died. She was a kind-hearted, common-place person, who acquitted herself blamelessly of her domestic duties, and enforced the observance of all ordinary proprieties and ceremonies, attending with equal punctuality the cathedral services and the card-parties of her neighbours, and duly holding assemblies and practising hospitality in her turn. Anna's chief attachment had ever been to her father, whom she accompanied in all his little migrations and visits. The shock of his wife's death brought on a paralytic disorder, which in the course of time impaired his intellects, and gradually reduced him to a condition of infantine weakness both of mind and body.

Lady Millar of Batheaston died in July, 1781. For nearly six previous years she had, during the Bath season, held an assembly once a fortnight, proposing to the company on each of these occasions subjects for poems to be read at the next meeting. The contributions were deposited in an "antique Etruscan vase," and taken out by three appointed gentlemen, who read them aloud, and decided on their comparative merits; three myrtle garlands being the rewards of the three competitors whose poems were preferred. Once every year a volume of these prize poems was published for the benefit of a charitable institution in the neighbourhood, and four volumes had appeared

when Lady Millar's death, in the prime of her days, put an end to the series. Among the competitors in these Batheaston games were Sir Brooke Boothby; Potter, the translator of 'Æschylus;' Edward Jerningham, author of 'The Nun,' 'Funeral of Arîber,' &c.; Anstey, author of 'The Bath Guide;' Hayley, author of 'The Triumphs of Temper;' Graves, author of 'The Spiritual Quixote;' Dr. Whalley, and many other celebrated writers, besides Miss Seward, who was repeatedly crowned with the choicest of the wreaths of victory. She wrote a poem, 'To the Memory of Lady Millar,' expressive of real and affectionate regret.

Her favourite signature to her sentimental and critical epistles and to her fugitive poems was "Julia."

The author of the present notice recollects to have met with many of her pieces, years ago, in 'The Universal Magazine,' which are not reprinted in the posthumous collection, especially one beginning—

"Oh, lend your wings, ye favouring gales," &c.

In 1782, she published her 'Louisa,' a poetical novel in four epistles, which was well received by the public, and speedily passed through repeated editions. The story is interesting, the death of Emira deeply pathetic; and the power of that writer must not be disputed who can at will touch our hearts and call forth our tears. The style is free from any unusual inversions; and passages of great beauty and feeling show, that under more favourable auspices, Anna Seward might have avoided those faults which have sullied her literary fame. For instance:—

"No grief my bosom at our parting knew
But that of bidding thee a long adieu,
And the sweet tears that such soft sorrows bring
Fall as light rain-drops in the sunny spring." *

* Ep. i., p. 225.

And—

"Faint in the yellow broom the oxen lay,
And the mute birds sat languid on the spray,
And nought was heard around the noontide bower,
Save that the mountain-bee from flower to flower
Seemed to prolong, with her assiduous wing,
The soft vibration of the tuneful string." *

Again—

"The plenteous dews that in the early ray
Gem the light leaf and tremble on the spray,
The fresh, cool, gales that undulating pass
With shadowy sweep along the bending grass." †

Of lines such as these, no British poet of any period need be ashamed.

In the year 1790, her ten years of unremitting watchfulness and tender assiduity terminated in the death of her fond father, from whom she inherited a handsome fortune. He was buried at Lichfield on the 4th of March, 1790. The episcopal palace of that city continued to be her home through life, but having now lost the chief object of her affectionate solicitude, she gave more time to her friends, and frequently spent weeks and months at their houses. So genuine was her love of literature, that she loved all literary aspirants, and without jealousy, envy, or any of those mean and invidious feelings which too often attend upon personal vanity, was ever ready to applaud with zealous partiality the works of her contemporaries.

In the year 1791, she stayed for some time at Cowslip Green with Hannah More and her admirable sisters, and after her departure, enthusiastically eulogised her hostesses—

"The virgin train,
Led by the boast of Britain's tuneful plain,
Where genius oft has fed its kindling fires,
Rolled the rapt eye, and struck the golden wires,

* Ep. i., p. 226. † Ibid., p. 272.

Bristol, that hears her More's distinguished name
Wafted by echoes round the shrine of fame.
On whose mild brow she sees bright laurels twine,
Culled from their choicest bowers by all the Nine,
Enwreathed with charity's assuasive balm,
And faith and virtue's never-dying palm."

Her visits to Hayley at Eartham in Sussex, to the Granvilles at Calwich, and to other friends at Buxton, Shrewsbury, Bath, Colton, and various places, are likewise celebrated in verse. Her repeated sojourns at Llangollen with Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby are also commemorated—

"Oh Cambrian Tempe! oft with transport hailed,
I leave thee now, as I did ever leave
Thee and thy peerless mistresses," &c.

There are other reminiscences of Llangollen which prove how justly she had appreciated the extraordinary beauty of its scenery, even to the most minute features.

In her 'Epistle to Cornelia,' the versified description of the faithfulness of even a betrayed woman's love, derived from the study of Hogarth's 'Rake's Progress,' reveals the kindly sympathy and the depth of feminine tenderness which possessed the inmost heart of Anna Seward.

In 1799, she published her 'Sonnets,' which afford creditable specimens of her skill in metre, rhythm, and rhyme. These are republished among 'The Poetical Works of Anna Seward, with Extracts from her Literary Correspondence, and a Biographical Preface,' by Sir Walter Scott, in three volumes, which he edited in 1810. Good sense, right sentiments, and extensive knowledge are manifested in almost all her verses. The numerous pieces which express her personal thoughts and feelings upon present scenes and passing events have all more or less of that quiet truth which insures human sympathy. She observes and copies objects with exactness, but her poetical pictures,

like those of the modern process called Nature-printing, are usually flattened, and blurred, and have life and elasticity crushed out of them. There is no artistic genius to reimbue them with vitality. She is earnest, but she wants originality and energy, and attempts to atone for the deficiency by artificial inflation. Many of her poems have the air of drawing-room compositions, shaped for momentary effect upon ascertained characters. In all her various subjects, and her different forms of treating them, there may perhaps be detected the style of some poet, whose tune, having caught, she plays with ingenious variations. An instance of her imitative cleverness may be found in 'Auld Willie's Farewell,' vol. iii., p. 358.

Ranked fairly among the British poets of her generation, her place would be between Mason and Hayley. Alike in society and in literature, she sought too much for admiration, and came before an assembly of friends, and before the public, in person and in print, dressed to perform a part, ever mindful of stage effect, and of—

"The tiara and the glittering zone."

It is easy to ridicule and despise the affectation of Miss Seward, but let the satirist remember that with her the vanity which prompted it was a fault of the surface: an affectionate, faithful, and generous heart beat below it. Her principles of duty were well defined; her virtues were sincere. On the contrary, simulation and dissimulation, in the present day usually indicate deception to be the prevalent and pervading vice of educated women of the world. Their vanity is not merely an absurd foible, but the visible emanation of deep internal falsehood. They act a part so incessantly, that after a few years' practice, they know little more of their own real selves than their

associates do. Their conduct has no basis in truthful and consistent principle; to produce a present effect is their one object through all circumstances; they live as it were on the stage and before an audience.

With the unpractised, feeble, and careless, a principal fault of style, whether written or conversational, is that of so misarranging words as to excite, in the first clause of a sentence, a false impression of the subsequent matter. This occasions mental fatigue to the recipient, who is tasked with the correction of his own first notions, and with the rectification of the author's statements, by the rule of natural order and precedency. Just as in advancing towards an object of sight, its lineaments and tints are gradually discerned, so, under ordinary circumstances, should the words of a sentence lead on to a correct apprehension of the meaning, in a true, exact, and well developed exposition of time, cause, and effect. On the same principle, if surprise is intended, the words must purposely be so placed as to produce the sensation of sudden beholding. Too much care cannot be spent in fitting apt words to apt thoughts, or in rendering language truthful and clear. When, on the contrary, instead of studying to form an orderly verbal medium for information, a writer or speaker endeavours to make the mere vehicle the chief object of interest, and incessantly obtrudes its artificial construction and fantastic decorations, then the proper use of syntax is abused, and the rude, natural utterance of the ignorant may justly be preferred to such perverse ingenuity. Our own Elizabethan era, rich in literature which forms a treasure for all times, produced redundant instances of affectation in the structure of language, and in the dainty and pedantic selection of words.

The beautiful and accomplished Frenchwomen, who "on

this side the Alps united the aristocracy of rank and of genius in one circle," sent forth, from the Hôtel de Rambouillet, at Paris, that ormolu phœnix, vivified with wit, which dazzled the eyes, spoiled the taste, and vitiated the style of some of the best contemporary and subsequent writers in Europe. The shafts of Molière in 'La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes,' 'Les Femmes Savantes,' 'Les Précieuses Ridicules,' &c. &c., wounded individuals, and exposed the artificial-romantic nature of their conceit; but the mechanism had tough capabilities of resistance, and could only be destroyed by time and use.

The decline of true taste in Italy in the first half of the seventeenth century had greatly influenced European literature. In 1613, the Academicians of Florence published their exclusively Tuscan 'Vocabolario della Crusca,' intending to reform the prevalent rudeness of expression, but falling unfortunately into an opposite extreme, of pedantic and harmonious affectation.

Thus might sufficient precedents be found in England, France, and Italy for the Darwinian exaggeration of the artificial style in poetry; but bad taste is of native growth in every soil, and bad example is everywhere seductive.

The Louis Quatorze style in English poetry had attained its perfection in Pope. His conciseness and strength, correctness and perspicuity, elegance, brilliancy and harmony remain unsurpassed and unsurpassable. Most of his imitators fell, for want of genius, into feebleness or utter inanity. Dr. Darwin brought to bear upon poetry the acuteness, subtlety, and strength of a mind which delighted in physical and mechanical science. An excess of wrought ornament encumbered his diction which, incapable of elevation, sought distinction in oddity and inversion. The soft unisons of well chosen sounds which

gave their charm to the verses of Pope, were broken by Darwin, and overpowered by the tinkle, clangour, and braying of brass instruments. What was firm in Pope, became hard in him, while Pope's well studied graces were superseded by mechanical evolutions or mountebank distortions. The example of her admired friend confirmed the tendencies of Anna Seward, and Pope, with a Darwinian difference, became her master and her model.

The letters of Pope undoubtedly furnished the direct models of her elaborate and ostentatious epistolary style. In power, and in almost every good point, her poetry is inferior to Dr. Darwin's; in pathos, however, it possesses an element of interest wholly wanting in his. Affected persons are always imitative; and no doubt the influx of Della Cruscan votaries with their fantastic and euphuistic importations, encouraged her, in emulation of their performances, to still greater extravagances of verbal folly.

Dr. Erasmus Darwin, who, on his second marriage, had removed his place of residence from Lichfield to Derby, died early in the year 1802: Miss Seward had consequently seen little of him for the last twenty years of his life; but one of his sons, having applied to her for anecdotes of his father, with the intention of preparing a memoir, she found that her reminiscences would not be altogether suitable for filial use, and consequently resolved to publish them herself.

The so-called 'Life of Dr. Darwin' is not properly a biography: it gives no consecutive account of the events of his career, no record of his mental acquirements, no insight of his principles and motives, no well-considered estimate of his abilities, no trustworthy impression of his general character. It shows that she had never penetrated

beyond that superficial pellicle which is opaque to all but deep thinking investigators of their own hearts. Any ordinary person, with the same opportunities of intercourse, might have given as good a sketch of his personal appearance, conversation, and occasional doings. Extracts from 'The Botanic Garden,' and her crude criticisms upon them, make up the greater part of the book; the last page of which is dated "Lichfield, April 13, 1803," an era pernicious and withering to Miss Seward's literary reputation: for all her other works have passed into obscurity, while that, the worst of all her productions, remains a conspicuous target for the shafts of successive generations of critics.

It is as unfair to judge of her by this work as it would be to estimate the literary character of Madame D'Arblay from her 'Memoirs of Dr. Burney,' written, as Lord Macaulay has remarked, in "the worst style that has ever been known among men." "No genius, no information, could save from proscription a book so written," adds the same brilliant reviewer; forgetting for the instant, the rival badness of style in Miss Seward's Life of Dr. Darwin, and its unhappy tenacity of fame. This book is not merely inelegant, pedantic, and replete with affectation, it is absolutely and daringly ungrammatical. Most of the words are English, but the structure of the sentences belongs to no language living or dead. She misapplies epithets, violates idioms, practises every possible form of inversion and contortion, and leads the reader to forget the subject in contemptuous abhorrence of its medium. Sometimes all this mischief is elaborately done; at others, by apparent inadvertence, she commences a sentence so awkwardly that no subsequent inflection can bring it to a proper close. As the climax to all censures upon the style of this amusing book, it may be justly characterized as unnatural.

The sketch of the author of 'Sandford and Merton,' Thomas Day, once a resident in the city of Lichfield, and a lover of Honora Sneyd, is one of the most interesting parts of this work.

Anna Seward was not a woman who could possibly outlive all her friends, for every new candidate for poetic fame was a recruit to the time-thinned ranks. The latter years of her life were gladdened by the personal acquaintance of Robert Southey and Walter Scott. The former was rather repelled by the ceremonious formality of her address, and by the studied compliments she paid him. The latter, more accustomed to society, and better acquainted with the varieties of human nature, first saw her in 1807, and has left a written record of his sentiments in some passages of his 'Biographical Preface,' where he says:—

"This may be no improper place to mention the impression which her appearance and conversation were calculated to make upon a stranger. They were indeed well worth a longer pilgrimage. Miss Seward when young must have been exquisitely beautiful, for in advanced age, the regularity of her features, the fire and expression of her countenance, gave her the appearance of beauty and almost of youth. Her eyes were auburn, of the precise shade and hue of her hair, and possessed great expression. In reciting, or speaking with animation they appeared to become darker and as it were to flash fire. I should have hesitated to state the impression which this peculiarity made upon me at the time, had not my observation been confirmed by that of the first actress of this or any other age,* with whom I lately happened to converse on our deceased friend's expressive powers of countenance. Miss Seward's

* Mrs. Siddons.

tone of voice was melodious, guided by excellent taste, and well suited to reading and recitation, in which she willingly exercised it."

He adds: "The great command of literary anecdote which Miss Seward possessed, her ready perception both of the serious and ludicrous, and her just observation and original taste, rendered her society delightful." Among her other accomplishments, Sir Walter eulogizes the remarkable distinctness and beauty of her hand-writing.

In the autumn of 1807, she was attacked by an eruptive and remittent fever; and being lowered by frequent blood-letting, intended for its cure, her fine constitution gave way, and she expired on Thursday the 23rd of March, 1809, aged sixty-six years and three months. Her two last letters to Sir Walter Scott are simple, grave, and self-possessed, in the prospect of immediate death.

The bulk of her literary correspondence was bequeathed by her to Constable of Edinburgh, who published it in six volumes. Sir Walter Scott was her literary executor.

Mary Tighe.

Mary, daughter of the Rev. William Blachford, was born in the city of Dublin in the year 1773. Her father died of a very short illness, a few months after her birth; and she was entirely indebted to her excellent mother for an education which added to every usual accomplishment of a gentlewoman, an acquaintance with the languages of ancient Greece and Rome. With their literature she made herself conversant, not neglecting that of modern Europe, and studying more especially English poetry and the writings of Edmund Spenser.

In 1793, she married her cousin, Henry Tighe, Esq., of Woodstock, Kilkenny, the historian of that county, and its

representative in the Irish House of Commons, a man of highly-cultivated mind and a Latin poet. It is incidentally recorded that she possessed "strong feelings and amiable affections;" and it may be inferred from her writings, that this lovely woman had made herself into an idol of delight and admiration both in domestic and social life, and rejoiced in the sunshine which genius shed around her. Consumptive malady was in her family: her health was always delicate, and her spirits variable; and when, in the year 1804, she experienced a severe attack of illness, her heart quailed in its pleasant course of worldly prosperity, and recognized with horror the inevitable approach of early death.

Her feelings had often before found expression in poetry, and now she had recourse to it to solace her painful regrets and to beguile her gloomy apprehensions. Under these circumstances 'Psyche,' her beautiful epic, appears to have been composed. It was printed in 1805, with a dedicatory sonnet to her mother, acknowledging

> "Affection's soothing voice,
> That eloquence of tenderness expressed,
> Which still my grateful voice confessed divine,"

as having instructed her to love, and thus enabled her to write love's legend. The first edition was wholly distributed among her private friends, and obtained such a tribute of cordial and critical praise, that Mrs. Tighe was prevailed upon to allow a second edition to be published. The profits of the sale were applied to building a wing to the Orphan Asylum at Wicklow, since called the Psyche Ward. It is unquestionably one of the finest poems ever written by a woman; full of imaginative power, passion, and melody. The stanza is Spenserian, and the main plan of the story, the ideal palaces, the long journey, the scenes

passed through, and the beings encountered, are all conceived and described after the manner of 'The Fairy Queen.' Her one great fault in the construction of the plan is, that although particular incidents are strictly allegorical, the whole, taken from beginning to end, is not so, the narrative in the two first cantoes having no secondary sense.

Those two first cantoes are conceived in the spirit of an ancient Greek who had visited Persia. They are wrought out as if by a luxurious Fatima, who, in the absence of her adored Pacha, reclining after a luscious repast, gorgeously attired and decked with gems of inestimable price, cheered by the soft-falling fountain-spray, stimulated by the fragrance of jessamine, and soothed by the steam of her hookah, cast her eyes on a rare intaglio in her pendant tresses, and languidly exercised her Oriental imagination by investing its fable with the voluptuous accessories of a Mahometan paradise; gently shuddering the while at the unexperienced and enhancing contrast of forlorn desertion, hardship, and privation. The descriptions of Vanity and Flattery in the third canto, of Suspicion in the fourth, of Patience in the fifth, and of the Castle of Indifference in the sixth, are worthy of Spenser himself.

The subject of the poem is the soul's probationary course, represented under the figure of Psyche. The leisurely feet of the Italian stanza accord with the prolix and diffuse style of narration, and give to the whole a soft and dream-like air. The sentiments are pure and tender; the descriptions true to nature and to feeling; and whether they depict the emotions of the heart, scenery wild and cultivated, the mythological legends of Greece, storms or fair weather, or the passage of a ship through the

waves, there is a fulness of knowledge, an accuracy of detail, a distinctness of imagery, which gives reality to every thing.

Her mind wields the implements of art, which it employs with enchanting dexterity, freedom, and grace. The diction is copious, rich, and apposite; the grammatical structure correct, lucid, and most musical. Verbal redundancy and slowness of recital are the principal faults of execution. The deficiencies of the poem are of a graver kind, revealing the lack of native strength and of Christian exaltation in the melancholy poet's soul. The enjoyments represented all belong to the refined gratification of the senses; and the discipline to which Psyche is subjected, as a punishment for her disobedient curiosity and a propitiatory humiliation to Venus, has no higher reward than contentment in the renewal and immortal continuance of those enjoyments.

The edition published by Longmans, in 1811, is marked on the title-page as the third; from thence the subjoined extracts are taken.

The description of the heroine is illustrated by a very beautiful simile:—

"For she was timid as the wintry flower,
That whiter than the snow it blooms among,
Droops its fair head, submissive to the power
Of every angry blast which sweeps along,
Sparing the lovely trembler, while the strong
Majestic tenants of the leafless wood
It levels low. But, ah! the pitying song
Must tell, how, than the tempest's self more rude
Fierce wrath and cruel hate their suppliant pursued."

Among her occupations in the palace of Love—

"To charm the languid hours of solitude,
He oft invites her to the Muse's lore;
For none have vainly e'er the Muse pursued,
And those whom she delights, regret no more
The social, joyous hours, while rapt they soar
To worlds unknown, and live in fancy's dream."

Psyche, in her wanderings, comes one day to a lovely bower surrounded by flowers:—

"And every sweet that Spring with fairy hands
Scatters in thy green path, enchanting May!
And every flowering shrub there clustering stands,
As though they wooed her to a short delay,
Yielding a charm to soothe her weary way;
Soft was the tufted moss, and sweet the breeze,
With lulling sound the murmuring waters play,
With lulling sound from all the rustling trees,
The fragrant gale invites to cool, refreshing ease."

The reliance of the gentle wife upon her husband in times of difficulty and danger, is admirably well depicted in the following stanzas:—

"Warned by late perils, now she scarcely dares
Quit for one moment his protecting eye,
Sure in his sight, her soul of nought despairs,
And nought looks dreadful when that arm is nigh,
On which her hopes with confidence rely.
By his advice, their constant course they bend,
He points where hidden danger they should fly;
On him securely, as her heaven-sent friend,
She bids her grateful heart contentedly depend.

Oh, who the exquisite delight can tell,
The joy which mutual confidence imparts,
Or who can paint the charm unspeakable
Which links in tender bands two faithful hearts!
In vain assailed by Fortune's envious darts,
Their mitigated woes are sweetly shared,
And doubled joy reluctantly departs:
Let but the sympathizing heart be spared,
What sorrow seems not light? what peril is not dared?"

The reply of Psyche to the questions of Selfishness is exquisite, both in thought and harmonious expression;—

"'Is aught then wanting in this fairy bower?
Or is there aught which yet thy heart can move?'
That heart, unyielding to their sovereign's power,
In gentle whispers sighing answers 'Love.'"

The cleverest of women has justly said:—"Quand on a pour premier but, en écrivant, de faire effet sur les autres, on ne se montre jamais à eux tel qu'un est réellement; mais

quand on écrit pour satisfaire à l'inspiration intérieure dont l'âme est saisie on fait connaître par ses écrits, même sans le vouloir, jusques aux moindres nuances de sa manière d'être et de penser." *

Such was pre-eminently the case with the poetry of Mrs. Tighe,—

"Verse in the finest mould of fancy cast,"

written to her own standard of taste, at the prompting of her guileless heart.

During six long years she painfully trod the valley of the shadow of death. Her verses entitled 'The Vartree,' show that she had

"Tried the vanities of life,
And all the poor, mean joys of fashion known,"

and that their enforced renunciation cost her a dreadful struggle. The fond attentions of her husband, her mother, her brother, and of many affectionate friends, soothed, however, the sad hours of suffering. In her 'Verses to Lady Charlemont in return for her presents of Flowers,' dated March, 1808, there are some sweet revealings of home happiness:—

"O'er me Affection loves to shed,
Her comforts full, unmeasured;
To bless my smiling hearth, she sends
The dearer smile of dearest friends;
And bids my prison couch assume
No form of pain, no air of gloom;
But sweet content and cheerful ease,
All that in solitude can please,
And all that soothing, social love
Can bid its quiet favourites prove,
Wooed by the voice of tenderness
Unite my happy home to bless."

* When it is our chief object in writing to produce an effect on others, we never show ourselves to them such as we really are: but when we write to gratify that internal inspiration which possesses the soul, we manifest in our writings, without being aware of it, the exact reflex of our own lives and thoughts.—'L'Allemagne,' par Mde. De Staël, vol. i., chap. xv.

In the four last verses of her 'Hagar in the Desert,' Mrs. Tighe applies the subject to her own case with touching pathos:—

"O'er thy empty pitcher mourning,
'Mid the desert of the world,
Thus, with shame and anguish burning,
From thy cherished pleasures hurled:
See thy great Deliverer nigh,
Calls thee from thy sorrow vain,
Bids thee on his love rely,
Bless the salutary pain.
From thine eyes the mists dispelling,
Lo! the well of life he shows,
In his presence ever dwelling,
Bids thee find thy true repose.
Future prospects rich in blessing,
Open to thy hopes secure;
Sure of endless joys possessing,
Of a heavenly kingdom sure."

And also in

THE LILY. WRITTEN IN MAY, 1809.

"How withered, perished seems the form
Of yon obscure, unsightly root,
Yet from the blight of wintry storm,
It hides secure the precious fruit.
The careless eye can find no grace
No beauty in the scaly folds,
Nor see within the dark embrace
What latent loveliness it holds.
Yet in that bulb, those sapless scales,
The Lily wraps her silver vest,
Till vernal suns and vernal gales
Shall kiss once more her fragrant breast.
Yes, hide beneath the mouldering heap
The undelighting, slighted thing,
There, in the cold earth buried deep,
In silence let it wait the Spring.
Oh, many a stormy night shall close
In gloom upon the barren earth,
While still in undisturbed repose
Uninjured lies the future birth;
And Ignorance, with sceptic eye,
Hope's patient smile shall wondering view;
Or mock her fond credulity,
As her soft tears the spot bedew.

Sweet smile of Hope, delicious tear!
The sun, the shower, indeed shall come,
The promised verdant shoot appear,
And Nature bid her blossoms bloom.

And thou, oh, Virgin Queen of Spring!
Shalt from thy dark and lowly bed,
Bursting thy green sheath's silken string,
Unveil thy charms, and perfume shed;

Unfold thy robes of purest white,
Unsullied from their darksome grave,
And thy soft petals' silvery light
In the mild breeze unfettered wave.

So Faith shall seek the lowly bed
Where humble Sorrow loves to lie,
And bid her thus her hopes entrust
And watch with patient, cheerful eye!

And bear the long, cold, wintry night,
And bear her own degraded doom,
And wait till Heaven's reviving light,
Eternal Spring, shall burst the gloom!"

The progress of religious hope may be traced in this affecting poem, which embodies all her sadness and all her consolation—all her love of this beautiful world, and hope for the next. The following is replete with still deeper and tenderer manifestations of the parting soul's experience:—

ON RECEIVING A BRANCH OF MEZEREON, WHICH FLOWERED AT WOODSTOCK, DEC. 1809.

"Odours of Spring, my sense ye charm,
With fragrance premature;
And 'mid these days of dark alarm,
Almost to hope allure.
Methinks with purpose soft ye come,
To tell of brighter hours,
Of May's blue skies, abundant bloom,
Her sunny gales and showers.

Alas! for me shall May in vain
The powers of life restore;
These eyes that weep and watch in pain
Shall see her charms no more.
No, no, this anguish cannot last!
Beloved friends, adieu!
The bitterness of death were past
Could I resign but you.

But, oh! in every mortal pang
That rends my soul from life,
That soul, which seems on you to hang
Through each convulsive strife,
Even now, with agonizing grasp
Of terror and regret,
To all in life its love would clasp
Clings close and closer yet.

Yet why, immortal, vital spark,
Thus mortally oppressed?
Look up, my soul, through prospects dark
And bid thy terrors rest;
Forget, forego, thy earthly part,
Thine heavenly being trust:
Ah! vain attempt, my coward heart,
Still shuddering clings to dust!

O ye, who soothe the pangs of death,
With love's own patient care,
Still, still retain this fleeting breath,
Still pour the fervent prayer!
And ye whose smile must greet my eye
No more, nor voice mine ear,
Who breathe for me the tender sigh,
And shed the pitying tear,

Whose kindness (though far, far removed,
My grateful thoughts perceive,
Pride of my life, esteemed, beloved,
My last sad claim receive:
Oh, do not quite your friend forget,
Forget alone her faults;
And speak of her with fond regret
Who asks your lingering thoughts."

These were the last verses she ever wrote. Her premonition was fulfilled: she never saw the blue skies of another May, expiring on the 24th of March, 1810; not at Rosanna in the county of Wicklow, which was the home of her married life, but at Woodstock in the county of Kilkenny. Her friend, cousin, and brother-in-law, at whose house she died, has recorded that—"Her fears of death were perfectly removed before she quitted this scene of trial and suffering, and her spirit departed to a better state of existence, confiding with heavenly joy in the acceptance and love of her Redeemer."

Several poets have rendered tribute to her genius; none

more worthily than Felicia Hemans, who in 1828 wrote 'The Grave of a Poetess,' of which the two last verses are remarkably appropriate:—

"Thou hast left sorrow in thy song,
A voice not loud but deep;
The glorious bowers of earth among,
How often didst thou weep!
Where couldst thou fix, on mortal ground
Thy tender thoughts and high?
Now peace the woman's heart hath found,
And joy the poet's eye."

In 1831 Mrs. Hemans visited Woodstock, and saw both the house in which she died and the grave of Mrs. Tighe, in company with the widower and some of her other kinsfolk; admired the glorious local scenery, and the recumbent effigy by Flaxman, and read with intense interest a manuscript collection of Mrs. Tighe's early poems. After having seen these memorials, Mrs. Hemans wrote her verses 'On Records of Immature Genius.'

"Oh! judge in thoughtful tenderness of those
Who richly dowered for life are called to die
Ere the soul's flame through storms hath won repose,
In truth's divinest ether, still and high;
Let their mind's riches claim a truthful sigh:
Deem them but sad, sweet fragments of a strain,
First notes of some yet struggling harmony,
By the strong rush, the crowding joy and pain
Of many inspirations met, and held
From its true sphere; oh! soon it might have swelled
Majestically forth! No doubt that He
Whose touch mysterious, may on earth dissolve
Those links of music, elsewhere will evolve
Their grand consummate hymn, from passion-gusts made free."

Mrs. Hemans also wrote 'Lines for the Album at Rosanna,'

"Where a sweet spirit once in beauty moved."

A fourth poem, 'Written after visiting a Tomb near Woodstock, in the county of Kilkenny,' bears little relation to Mrs. Tighe, excepting in five out of its forty-four lines, two of those five being exquisitely fine:—

"Oh, Love and Song! though of heaven your powers,
Dark is your fate in this world of ours."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE POETESSES.

A.D. 1810-1825.

Mrs. Hunter — Mrs. Thrale — Jane Taylor — Eleanor Anne Porden — Mrs. Barbauld — Lady Anne Barnard.

"To mortal toils, of various kind,
Are sweet but different gifts assigned." *

ANNE HUNTER.

ACCORDING to Burke's genealogy, Anne was the eldest daughter of Robert Home, Esquire, of Greenlaw Castle, in the county of Berwick. Robert Chambers, in his 'Scottish Biography,' mentions her as the daughter of Mr. Boyne Home, surgeon of Burgoyne's Regiment of Light Horse, and both descriptions are probably consistent and correct. She was born in 1742. While John Hunter, the great surgeon and natural philosopher, was rising to eminence, love for this beautiful and accomplished woman stimulated his efforts to overcome the obstacle of poverty, and to procure the means of suitable maintenance for one whom he deemed well suited to be both a household joy and an ornament to any station in society. The attachment was mutual, and, after a delay of several years, they were married in the year 1771. Her younger brother, afterwards Sir Everard Home, Baronet, was then a boy at

* Pindar's 1st Isthmian Ode; translated by Wheelwright.

Westminster School, and John Hunter generously undertook to bring him up to his own profession. Mr. and Mrs. Hunter had several children, of whom only two attained maturity, meriting their father's frequent boast "that if he had been allowed to bespeak a pair of children, they should have been those with which Providence had favoured him." The son became a major in the army, the daughter married General Campbell, of Inverneil.

Mrs. Hunter's amiable disposition rendered her deeply beloved by her family: her fine natural talents had been assiduously improved by cultivation, and she delighted in devoting them to the sacred purpose of soothing and gladdening her husband's toil-worn spirits. They kept a liberal house, entertained the best company, and when Mrs. Vesey's declining health incapacitated her from assembling the great, the learned, and the witty, for social intercourse, Mrs. Hunter threw open her reception rooms once a fortnight every winter to the same brilliant parties of educated talkers and thinkers of every class. Mrs. Hunter had fine musical abilities; she played and sang with remarkable taste and skill, and the delicacy of her features and dignity of her person were universally attractive; nevertheless, her gentle and unassuming temper induced her to be only proud of owing everything to her distinguished husband, and to attribute all the admiration and attention which she met with to the world's estimation of his extraordinary merit. John Hunter's sudden death, on the 16th of October, 1793, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, left her a widow in easy though not affluent circumstances, and she subsequently withdrew into comparative retirement. In 1806, yielding to the persuasions of friends, she published a collection of her poems, many of which had been set to music by Haydn.

She died, at her house in Holles-street, on the 7th of January, 1821, in the seventy-ninth year of her age.

Feminine tenderness and delicacy of sentiment are the chief characteristics of her poetry, of which the following piece is a specimen:—

THE LOT OF THOUSANDS.

"When hope lies dead within the heart,
By secret sorrow close concealed,
We shrink lest looks or words impart
What must not be revealed.

T is hard to smile when one would weep,
To speak when one would silent be,
To wake when one would wish to sleep,
And wake to agony.

Yet such the lot by thousands cast,
Who wander in this world of care,
And bend beneath the bitter blast,
To save them from despair.

But Nature waits her guests to greet
Where disappointment cannot come,
And Time guides with unerring feet,
The weary wanderers home."

'Queen Mary's Lament,' 'My mother bids me bind my hair,' and other popular favourites are hers.

HESTER LYNCH THRALE.

John Salusbury, Esquire, of Bachegraig, Flintshire, married, in the year 1739, Hester Maria, daughter of Sir Thomas Cotton, Baronet, of Combermere, in the county of Chester; and, on the 27th of January, 1740, Hester Lynch, their only child and heir, was born at Bodvil, in Caernarvonshire. With the advantages of gentle blood and patrimonial wealth she possessed great personal attractions, vivacious spirits, and those quick, keen, faculties of mind which justly entitle their possessor to be called a clever woman.

Her education was carefully attended to, and her many

accomplishments, wit, and conversational brilliancy, gained early admiration in fashionable circles.

In 1763 she married Mr. Henry Thrale, M.P. for Southwark, one of those princely metropolitan brewers, who, to quote the pompous and auctioneerlike description of his friend Dr. Johnson, "possessed the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice." In the year 1765 that acquaintance with the great lexicographer commenced, which soon rose to intimacy, conduced to the happiness of all parties, added to the living celebrity of Mrs. Thrale, and laid the foundation of her literary monument.

In the following year she contributed several poems to Anna Williams's 'Miscellanies,' and one among them has proved the most valuable of all Mrs. Thrale's writings, and still holds its solitary place in public estimation by the claim of intrinsic merit.

In 1781, after having passed through eighteen years of domestic trial softened by social enjoyment, the sudden death of Mr. Thrale left her a wealthy widow. They had previously lost their only son, and Mrs. Thrale, with her four daughters, removed after her husband's decease from his hospitable home at Streatham to a house in the city of Bath. There she engaged the services of Signor Gabriel Piozzi, a young and handsome Italian, as music-master to her daughters, and, in defiance of the remonstrances of her friends, she married him in 1784. In the same year Dr. Johnson died, and Mrs. Piozzi published a volume entitled 'Anecdotes of Dr. Samuel Johnson during the last twenty years of his life.' This book, though inexact and incomplete, as woman's works are ever apt to be, contains materials of which subsequent biographers have proved the value.

Soon after her second marriage Mrs. Piozzi accompanied

her husband to his native country, became acquainted at Florence with Mr. Robert Merry, the self-styled Della Crusca, Mr. Bertie Greathead, Mr. William Parsons, and other English gentlemen of equally bad taste, adopted their literary peculiarities, and contributed several compositions, both in prose and verse, to their collection, printed in 1786, and called 'The Florentine Miscellany.'

In 1788 she published two volumes of 'Letters to and from Dr. Samuel Johnson.' In 1789 she published 'Observations and Reflections made in the course of a Journey through France, Italy, and Germany,' in two volumes: in 1794 her 'British Synonymy, or an Attempt to Regulate the Choice of Words in Familiar Conversation,' in two volumes; and, in 1801, 'Retrospection, or a Review of the most striking and important Events, Characters, Situations, and their Consequences, which the last eighteen hundred years have presented to the view of Mankind.'

In 1809 Signor Piozzi died. Her elastic spirits depressed for a little while by this bereavement recovered in due time their natural tone, and lasted out her life. On the 27th of January, 1820, she celebrated her eightieth birthday by an entertainment in the Assembly Rooms at Bath, where, assisted by her kinsfolk, Sir John and Lady Salusbury, she received between seven and eight hundred people with her wonted urbanity and sprightliness. She opened the ball with Sir John, danced with the alacrity and dignity of her youthful days, and afterwards presided with affable hospitality at the supper-table, having one British admiral on her right and another on her left hand.

On the 2nd of May, 1821, she died at Clifton.

Her only good poem needs no eulogy, it commends itself to the common sense of mankind.

THE THREE WARNINGS. A TALE.

"The tree of deepest root is found
Least willing still to quit the ground:
'T was therefore said, by ancient sages,
That love of life increas'd with years
So much that in our latter stages,
When pains grows sharp, and sickness rages,
The greatest love of life appears.

This great affection to believe,
Which all confess, but few perceive,
If old assertions can't prevail,
Be pleased to hear a modern tale.

When sports went round, and all were gay,
On neighbour Dobson's wedding-day,
Death call'd aside the jocund groom
With him into another room,
And looking grave, 'You must,' says he,
'Quit your sweet bride, and come with me.'
'With you! and quit my Susan's side!
'With you!' the hapless husband cried;
'Young as I am! 't is monstrous hard!
'Besides, in truth, I'm not prepared:
'My thoughts on other matters go,
'This is my wedding-night, you know.'

What more he urg'd I have not heard,
His reasons could not well be stronger;
So Death the poor delinquent spar'd,
And left to live a little longer.
Yet calling up a serious look,
His hour-glass trembled while he spoke,
'Neighbour,' he said, 'farewell; no more
'Shall Death disturb your mirthful hour;
'And further to avoid all blame
'Of cruelty upon my name,
'To give you time for preparation,
'And fit you for your future station,
'Three several Warnings shall you have,
'Before you 're summoned to the grave:
'Willing for once I'll quit my prey,
'And grant a kind reprieve:
'In hopes you'll have no more to say,
'But when I call again this way,
'Well pleas'd the world will leave.'
To these conditions both consented,
And parted perfectly contented.

What next the hero of our tale befell,
How long he liv'd, how wise, how well,

How roundly he pursu'd his course,
And smok'd his pipe, and strok'd his horse,
The willing Muse shall tell:
He chaffer'd then, he bought, he sold,
Nor once perceived his growing old,
Nor thought of Death as near;
His friends not false, his wife no shrew,
Many his gains, his children few,
He pass'd his hours in peace:
But while he view'd his wealth increase,
While thus along Life's dusty road
The beaten track content he trod,
Old Time, whose haste no mortal spares,
Uncall'd, unheeded, unawares,
Brought on his eightieth year.

And now one night in musing mood,
As all alone he sate,
Th' unwelcome messenger of Fate
Once more before him stood.

Half kill'd with anger and surprise,
'So soon return'd!' old Dobson cries.
'So soon d'ye call it?' Death replies;
'Surely, my friend, you 're but in jest;
'Since I was here before,
'T is six-and-thirty years at least,
'And you are now fourscore.'

'So much the worse,' the clown rejoined;
'To spare the aged would be kind:
'However, see your search be legal;
'And your authority—is 't regal?
'Else you are come on a fool's errand,
'With but a Secretary's warrant.
'Besides you promis'd me Three Warnings,
'Which I have look'd for nights and mornings,
'But for that loss of time and ease,
'I can recover damages.'
'I know,' cries Death, 'that, at the best,
'I seldom am a welcome guest:
'But don't be captious, friend, at least:
'I little thought you'd still be able
'To stump about your farm and stable;
'Your years have run to a great length,
'I wish you joy, though, of your strength.'
'Hold,' says the farmer, 'not so fast,
'I have been lame this four years past.'
'And no great wonder,' Death replies;
'However, you still keep your eyes;
'And sure, to see one's loves and friends,
'For legs and arms would make amends.'

'Perhaps,' says Dobson, 'so it might,
'But latterly I've lost my sight.'
'This is a shocking story, 'faith;
'Yet there 's some comfort still,' says Death;
'Each strives your sadness to amuse,
'I'll warrant you hear all the news.'
'There 's none,' cries he, 'and if there were,
'I'm grown so deaf, I could not hear,'
'Nay then,' the spectre stern rejoined,
'These are unjustifiable yearnings;
'If you are Lame, and Deaf, and Blind,
'You've had your Three sufficient Warnings.
'So come along, no more we'll part!'
He said, and touched him with his dart;
And now old Dobson, turning pale,
Yields to his fate—so ends my tale."

JANE TAYLOR.

The children of the British empire are more indebted to Dr. Isaac Watts than to any other writer, and next to him perhaps to Anne and Jane Taylor of Ongar. Isaac Taylor, their father, practised for many years the art of line-engraving, and gained distinction in London. His wife was a woman of excellent sense and of many acquirements. They had a large family of children, and Jane, the second daughter, was born in London on the 23rd of September, 1783. In the summer of the year 1786 they removed to Lavenham in Suffolk, where the father continued his artistic labours, and being a man of deep piety and energetic temper occupied himself occasionally in delivering lectures on religious and scientific subjects.

Delicate health, fertility of practical invention, and a tendency to imaginative pleasures were among her early characteristics. She began to make verses and tales at a very early age, and the first ambition which her timid and reserved nature evinced was to write a book. Her temper was very gentle, her affections were tender and deep, and she was more especially distinguished by a susceptibility

for generous and faithful friendship, which continuously made the wish to gratify those whom she loved a principal motive of action. Early in the year 1796 her father accepted the invitation of an Independent congregation at Colchester, and became their minister. He educated his children with singular care, judgment, and success, laying the foundation of comprehensive knowledge, and balancing the objects of mental interest so as to prevent a narrow and exclusive attachment to any one pursuit. This wise and clever man also instructed all his sons and daughters in the art of engraving, as a means, should necessity occur, of earning their own livelihood. His wife aided him zealously in the work of family instruction, and not only made her daughters acquainted with feminine accomplishments of an elegant kind, but practically and thoroughly conversant with every branch of domestic economy. Besides the stated lessons which Jane Taylor daily received through a long series of years, and the knowledge of facts and principles which she imbibed with the very atmosphere of her home, the incitement of pious and amiable example in her parents and the affectionate emulation of her brothers and sisters led her from infancy to pursue with eagerness all things morally and mentally excellent. The family changes of residence, and occasional visits from home supplied her with the experience of varied conventional life in the metropolis, in a country town near the sea, and in a rural district. With a capacity enriched by these and by many tributary sources, and with faculties naturally fine though almost shrinking from disclosure, Jane Taylor grew up to womanhood. Her domestic lot was a happy one. In her paternal home she lived among congenial spirits, loving and beloved, in the unobtrusive employment of talents, of which the use implies enjoy-

ment, while their aim, directed by duty, assures a happy success, apart from those immediate and transient results which often brought the glow of delight to her affectionate heart.

In the year 1810 her father resigned his charge at Colchester, and, having accepted one of a similar kind at Ongar, removed thither with his family in 1811. With that place their name and fame became henceforth indissolubly connected. Mr. Taylor was the author of several books intended for the use and benefit of young persons; and, late in life, Mrs. Taylor also published several, with the apparent intention of making known to other parents those principles which had been so efficaciously applied to the training of her own highly-gifted progeny.

It was once projected that Jane Taylor and her eldest sister should join in establishing a school, but, to her great relief, family circumstances required different arrangements. Anne Taylor married the Rev. Joseph Gilbert, and Jane Taylor gave herself up to nurse the sick, to accompany the valetudinarian in excursions, to teach poor children to read, to manage domestic affairs, and to make herself useful either at home or among her relations and friends in every possible way, pursuing meanwhile her literary occupations whenever health and leisure allowed. Much of her time, when away, was spent in the western counties, with that beloved brother whose admirable writings have since edified the Christian world.

Habitual diffidence and religious melancholy constituted the principal drawbacks upon her great advantages, and produced the chief trials and sorrows of her mortal probation. Aided by benignant household influences and upheld by humble and steadfast piety, she combated these besetting evils, even when enhanced by the gradual decline of

physical strength under the corrosion of painless cancer, of which she died, in calm and peaceful hope, on the 5th of April, 1822.

'The Beggar Boy,' which appeared in 'The Minor's Pocket Book' for 1804, was the first thing she ever published. Her share in the 'Original Poems,' to which her sister Anne and many other members of the family contributed, harmonizes with the general tenor of the work in furnishing a collection of simple and familiar stories, examples, descriptions, and didactic warnings, pleasant to the ear and fascinating to the attention of childhood, while gently instilling truths into the very substance of the warm little heart, to remain an inseparable part of its moral nature for ever.

Jane Taylor was one of 'The Associate Minstrels,' whose volume gained much contemporary fame. She also contributed to 'The Youth's Magazine' and other periodicals.

Her hymns, and those of her sister Anne, in the little volume entitled 'Hymns for Infant Minds,' must have been composed for individual children, because every word, sentence, and meaning, is precisely and adroitly fitted to the comprehension of children in general, and no theoretic child could have served as a true type of the species. In her hymns, the intuitive sense of helpless dependence and of moral obligation, as evinced by infant hearts, is met, cherished, and supplied with the innate and tender skill of a woman, who, remembering her own early feelings, can participate in those of the little ones whom she loves. The 'Hymns for Sunday-Schools' are also excellent. The 'Nursery Rhymes,' which amaze and delight all intelligent children, by entering into their sayings, and doings, and moods of mind, contain some verses of true poetry which have kindled the living flame of bardic inspiration in more

than one young breast, and wrought for themselves an abiding place in the memory of many a grateful, though unknown, friend of the Taylors of Ongar.

The following is one of a series marked with the initials "J. T." in the third edition, published by Darton and Harvey in 1809.

THE MEADOWS.

"We'll go to the meadows where cowslips do grow;
And buttercups looking as yellow as gold;
And daisies and violets beginning to blow;
For it is a most beautiful sight to behold!

The little bee humming about them is seen,
The butterfly merrily dances along;
The grasshopper chirps in the hedges of green,
And the linnet is singing his liveliest song.

The birds and the insects are happy and gay,
The beasts of the field they are glad and rejoice,
And we will be thankful to God ev'ry day,
And praise his great name in a loftier voice.

He made the green meadows, he planted the flow'rs,
He sent his bright sun in the heavens to blaze,
He created these wonderful bodies of ours,
And as long as we live we will sing of his praise."

The 'City Scenes' and the 'Rural Scenes,' in which Jane Taylor had also a principal partnership, exhibit advantageously the observant aptitude and rectitude of the clever authors and artists, who, with words graphic as their graving tools, bring London and its every-day sights and sounds, the country in its ordinary aspects and with its usual inhabitants and itinerants, before the fancy, with the softening effect of distance and the cheerful stir of reality.

Her 'Display, a Tale for Young People' was published in 1815, and attended with great success. It has faults of style and of structure which render it unpleasing to many of those whom it is necessary to please in order to benefit, but it embodies much knowledge of human nature, of feminine character, and of middle-class life. Its object is

to lead young girls to be really, honestly, and thoroughly the amiable creatures they fain would appear to be, and to aim, not at showy and vain-glorious distinctions but at the simple adjustment of the principles and conduct to the allotted position in society, seeking through all worldly complications to find true happiness in the fulfilment of duty. Perhaps the purpose of the book may be rather too ostensibly marked on every page, and would have wrought more effectually upon youthful minds had it been less sedulously kept before them and left more to be implied and inferred. The characters are drawn with a firm yet delicate stroke, and imbued with only just colour enough to mark their distinctions plainly.

In 1816 she produced her most elaborate work, 'Essays in Rhyme on Morals and Manners.'

Her mature productions evince sound practical sense and remarkable acuteness, though she seldom appears to be as much at ease when addressing grown-up persons as when shaping her quaint and lively fancies for the minds of children.

'The Philosopher's Scales' is a spirited composition replete with sarcastic mirth, that mirth which is ever so closely allied to melancholy, and it might by her own judicious revision have been shaped into a very clever and perfect piece of satire.

An idea of it is briefly conveyed by the—

MORAL.

"Dear Reader, if e'er self-deception prevails,
We pray you to try the philosopher's scales;
But if they are lost in the ruins around,
Perhaps a good substitute thus may be found.
Let Judgment and Conscience in circles be cut,
To which strings of Thought may be carefully put;
Let these be made even with Caution extreme,
And Impartiality use as a beam:
Then bring those good actions which Pride overrates,
And tear up your Motives to serve for the weights."

"The lively reproof thus conveyed is spoilt by the enjoined application of material scissors to mental and moral qualities—

"Let Judgment and Conscience in circles be cut," &c.

The following meditation in rhyme is an utterance of the heart:—

THE THINGS THAT ARE UNSEEN AND ETERNAL.

"There is a state unknown, unseen,
Where parted souls must be:
And but a step may be between
That world of souls and me.

The friend I loved has thither fled,
With whom I sojourned here:
I see no sight, I hear no tread,
But may she not be near?

I see no light, I hear no sound,
When midnight shades are spread:
Yet angels pitch their tents around,
And guard my quiet bed.

Jesus was wrapt from mortal gaze,
And clouds conveyed him hence;
Enthroned amid the sapphire blaze,
Beyond our feeble sense.

Yet say not—Who shall mount on high,
To bring him from above?
For, lo! the Lord is always nigh
The children of his love.

The Saviour whom I long have sought,
And would, but cannot see:
And is he here? oh, wondrous thought!
And will he dwell with me?

I ask not with my mortal eye
To view the vision bright;
I dare not see thee, lest I die;
Yet, Lord, restore my sight!

Give me to see thee, and to feel
The mental vision clear;
The things unseen reveal, reveal,
And let me know them near.

I seek not fancy's glittering height,
That charmed my ardent youth;
But in thy light would see the light,
And learn thy perfect truth.

The gathering clouds of sense dispel,
That wrap my soul around;
In heavenly places make me dwell,
While treading earthly ground.
Illume this shadowy soul of mine,
That still in darkness lies;
Oh, let the light in darkness shine,
And bid the day-star rise.
Impart the faith that soars on high,
Beyond this earthly strife,
That holds sweet converse with the sky,
And lives eternal life."

Her eminent brother, Mr. Isaac Taylor of Stansted Rivers, has written a 'Memoir of Jane Taylor' with an analytical view of her character and talents. He has also collected her fugitive pieces and literary remains. To all readers who study education as a system, to those who are diligently bent on self-improvement, and more especially to young girls who feel in their hearts the stirring impulse of literary ambition, those volumes ought to be incalculably precious, in which the gradual development of Jane Taylor's character is traced by the fraternal hand of the author of 'Home Education.'

Eleanor-Anne Porden.

Eleanor-Anne was the youngest daughter of Mr. William Porden, of Berners Street, London, an eminent architect. She was born in the year 1795, gave early indications of superior talents, and acquired with facility a knowledge of several languages, and an exact and extensive acquaintance with the physical sciences. Her family and friends were fond of literature, and a salt-box for poetical contributions was kept at her father's house. Her first composition, a poem entitled 'The Veils, or the Triumph of Constancy,' was placed in that depository before she had completed her seventeenth year. It obtained the admiration of her social circle, and was published in

the year 1815, with a dedication to the Countess Spencer. The reviews of the period made favourable mention of the work. It represents the regions of the four so-called elements, earth, air, fire, and water; and shows their active properties under the imagery of fabled inhabitants engaged in antagonistic struggles for supremacy. The operation of this Rosicrucian machinery is ingenious, and the versification not below mediocrity. Crudeness and pedantry are the most prominent faults of the 'Veils.' The present critic recollects to have read it when a child with lively interest, but probably that interest arose in a great measure from sympathetic ambition.

Some years afterwards Miss Porden published another poem, called the 'Arctic Expedition.' In 1822 she produced her best work, an epic poem on the subject of the third Crusade; and in the same year she unfortunately ruptured a blood-vessel on the lungs, which increased an inherent tendency to consumption. In August, 1823, she married Captain Franklin, and in June, 1824, gave birth to a daughter, after which for a short time her health revived.

Mary Russell Mitford, in the introduction to her 'Dramatic Works,' says:—"It was during the run of 'Julian,' that, seeing much of my dear friend Miss Porden (afterwards married to Sir John Franklin), and talking with her of subjects for a fresh effort, one or the other, I hardly know which, hit upon 'Rienzi.' . . . . . Miss Porden had herself written an heroic poem called 'Cœur de Lion,' which, if anybody now-a-days could read an epic two volumes long, would be found remarkable as a promise; so she was far from being startled at my boldness, and took a vivid interest in my attempt. A year or two after, when in London negotiating about this very play, I saw

her again as Mrs. Franklin. Her husband was in Lincolnshire, taking leave of his relations before setting forth on one of his adventurous voyages; and in the midst of her warm and undiminished sympathy with my anxieties, she talked of that husband whose projects of polar discovery had filled her imagination, showed me his bust and their little girl, and a flag which she was working for him, as her own Berengaria had done for Richard. It was poetry in action, epic poetry; and I, too, sympathised with the devoted wife. But I saw, what at that time her own sister had not suspected, that she was dying. This warm-hearted and large-minded woman was of a frame and temperament the most delicate and fragile. The agitation of parting was too much for her, and before Captain Franklin's expedition was out of the Channel she was dead." * Referring afterwards to the success of 'Rienzi,' Miss Mitford adds:—"Still I missed her whose cheering prognostics had so often spurred me on, and whose latest interest in literature had been excited by this very play." †

The expedition of Sir John Franklin above alluded to was that of 1825, when he left England to undertake his second land exploration of the arctic regions, and Mrs. Franklin died on the 22nd of February in that year.

Anna Lætitia Barbauld.

Anna Lætitia Aikin was born in the village of Kibworth-Harcourt, in Leicestershire, on the 20th of June in the year 1743, the same month and year in which King George III. first saw the light. This coincidence she always remembered, and it added the feeling of personal regard to her principle of loyalty. Her father, John Aikin, D.D., a learned Socinian minister, then kept a

* Pp. xxvii.-ix. † Ibid., p. xxix.

boys' school; his wife was the daughter of the parochial clergyman. Anna Lætitia, their first-born child, evincing precocious and extraordinary ability, with insatiable eagerness for instruction, learned to read with correctness and fluency by the time that she was two years and a half old. She continued for three years an only child. Her brother, John Aikin, afterwards M.D., was born in 1746; there were no other brothers or sisters, and from infancy to the close of life he looked up to her with tender admiration, delighted in sharing her pursuits, and in stimulating the activity of her fine intellect. Her father, who cherished the ordinary prejudice against learned women, yielding at last to her urgent entreaties and to the conviction of her masculine capacity for study, assisted her in the acquirement of the Latin and Greek languages, and allowed her the free use of his small but select library.

The population of Kibworth-Harcourt did not afford the companionship of a single girl of her own age and station; and until she had attained her fifteenth year, her mother and grandmother were her only female associates. Her brother was not educated at home, she was carefully excluded from intercourse with the schoolboys, and consequently left to invent her own amusements, and to follow the reflective and meditative tendencies of her keenly observant mind. Her descriptive and humourous poem, called 'Washing Day,' evidently drawn from the life, seems to have been suggested by reminiscences of the customs and manners of her early home.

Natural reserve and an undemonstrative disposition produced, under these circumstances, a self-conscious embarrassment and constraint, which rendered her always bashful in fashionable society, although her manners were unexceptionable in courteous gentleness, and her conver-

sation was full of sweetness and power. Rural scenery, and all its animate and inanimate constituents and accessories, soothed and fed her desire for information, while they drew forth her imaginative power, leading her to a practical acquaintance with natural history, and to the delineation of favourite objects with her pencil as well as with her pen.

She read and re-read the books to which she had access with that concentrated attention which assimilated their contents with the mind; they shaped her principles of action, and tinctured for ever the warp and woof of thoughts and feelings. Such solitary musings and grave companions confirmed her natural inclination towards serious and earnest considerations of religion; and the vast mysteries of existence and futurity hung their stupendous shadows over all her earthly prospects and pursuits, even from her early youth.

In the year 1758, when fifteen years of age, Anna Lætitia Aikin experienced a change of scene and of society which produced important effects upon the development of her character, and set the current of her subsequent life. Her father, Dr. Aikin, accepted the office of classical tutor in the dissenting academy at Warrington, and became a resident there with his family. The origin of the Unitarian community in England dates after the year 1730; about which period the chapels and endowments of the old Presbyterians passed, by the gradual declension of the ministers, into the hands of men, who, holding the main tenets of Socinus, asserted the unlimited right to think what they pleased and to say what they thought; deemed faith to be fanaticism, and human reason all-sufficient for human salvation, without Divine revelation and Divine influence.

In 1758, the elements of theological change wrought with strong effervescence in the minds of the tutors and pupils of the Warrington academy; many of whom, in succession, distinguished themselves by important discoveries and inventions in physics and mechanics. Among those men of restless and investigating minds, and the adoring female votaries of their respective homes, her social and friendly nature first found expansive sympathy; and there she entered upon that competitive arena which must, in one way or other, be found and trodden, before the conscious possessor of mental power can win the acknowledgment of its reality, and ascertain its comparative worth.

From Priestley and his colleagues she acquired a theoretical and practical knowledge of the physical sciences; watching the detection or elucidation of every fact which they ascertained, and familiarizing her mind with their theories, while reverence for their mental superiority soldered the fetters of heretical sectarianism. General admiration was given to her abilities and attainments. Her personal beauty, fine figure, exquisite complexion of red and white, delicately-chiselled features, dark-blue eyes radiant with intelligent vivacity, an air of perfect health and social enjoyment, sufficed to procure pardon from the most invidious scholars; while the absence of pride and pretension in every form, and the charm of invariable affability, secured her from the envy of her female acquaintance. She zealously identified herself with the academy, and has eulogized it in her poem called 'The Invitation.'

About the close of the year 1771, her brother, having completed his professional education, returned home to practise as a physician at Warrington. His presence

added much to his sister's happiness, and proved the means of rendering her talents useful to the public. By his advice, persuasion, and almost compulsion, she published, in 1773, a collection of her poems. The applause of the critical reviewers declared her unequivocal success as an authoress, and no less than four editions of the volume were required in the course of twelve months

Again, in the same year, at her enterprising brother's instigation, she collected her prose compositions, and allowed them to be published with his own, under the title of 'Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose, by J. and L. A. Aikin.' This book also met with great success, and served to establish the literary reputation of both the brother and sister, while it largely increased their circle of friends. The celebrated Mrs. Montagu and some other ladies, admiring the high moral principles and great abilities, together with the peculiar faculty for imparting valuable information manifested in the writings of the Warrington heroine, proposed to her the establishment, under their auspices and her control, of a college for the improved education of young ladies of high rank. Her rejection of the flattering offer, and her reasons for that rejection, afford a remarkable example of discretion and candour, prove the thoroughness of her self-cultivation, and the severely just estimate which she made of her own acquirements.

After demonstrating that the proposed literary academy would be calculated rather "to form such characters as the 'Précieuses' or the 'Femmes Savantes' of Molière, than good wives or agreeable companions," and recommending a preferable system of instruction for girls from nine to fourteen years of age, she proceeds to declare her own unfitness to become the head of such an establishment, in consequence of various disqualifications. In the course

of this enumeration, she remarks,—"But suppose I were tolerably qualified to instruct those of my own rank, consider that *these* [the proposed pupils] must be of a class far superior to those I have lived amongst and conversed with. Young ladies of that rank ought to have their education superintended by a woman perfectly well-bred, from whose manner they might catch that ease and gracefulness which can only be learned from the best company; and she should be able to direct them, and judge of their progress in every genteel accomplishment. I could not judge of their music, their dancing; and if I pretended to correct their air, they might be tempted to smile at my own, for I know myself remarkably deficient in gracefulness of person, in my air and manner, and in the easy graces of conversation. Indeed, whatever the kind partiality of my friends may think of me, there are few things I know well enough to teach them with any satisfaction, and many I never could learn myself." How strongly does this self-diffidence contrast with the presumptuous folly of those superficial smatterers, who eagerly set up to teach, as it were, the letter "a," before they have themselves attained to the knowledge of "b"!

In May, 1774, Anna Letitiæ Aikin married the object of a long attachment, the Rev. Rochemont Barbauld, who, being the descendant of a French Protestant refugee and the son of a clergyman of the Established Church of England, chaplain to the Princess Mary of England, Landgravine of Hesse, received his early education in Germany and France, and was sent to complete his theological studies at Warrington with a view to his taking Holy Orders. From Priestley and his disciples Mr. Barbauld soon learned to doubt, or only to yield half credence to, the doctrines of Christianity. He consequently gave

up his expectations in the Church, and, having no private fortune, accepted the proffered charge of a Unitarian congregation at Palgrave, near Diss, and set up there a boarding-school for the sons of gentlemen.

Uninterrupted success attended Mr. Barbauld's laborious undertaking. His house overflowed with pupils, and new ones anxiously awaited opportunities of entrance, attracted, not only by the scholastic reputation and amiable character of the master, but by his wife's literary celebrity, and the value of that efficient aid which she rendered to the institution. To her apartment the classes joyously repaired for lessons in geography, expecting renewed entertainment and delight. She seems to have been the first, or at least among the first, who combined physical, historical, and ethnological information with a detailed description of the earth, its superficial divisions and statistics. Nor were her lessons in English composition less welcome.

"On Wednesdays and Saturdays the boys were called in separate classes to her apartment. She read a fable, a short story, or a moral essay to them aloud, and then sent them back into the school-room to write it out on the slates in their own words. Each exercise was separately overlooked by her, the faults of grammar were obliterated, the vulgarisms were chastised, the idle epithets were cancelled, and a distinct reason was always assigned for every correction, so that the arts of inditing and criticising were in some degree learned together." *

This is the testimony of a distinguished man, who owned her as "the mother of his mind."

Previous to every summer vacation the boys used to perform a play, and she not only instructed them in graceful

* Taylor's Biographical Notice of Sayers, quoted from Aikin's 'Memoir of Mrs. Barbauld.'

elocution, and wrote suitable prologues, interludes, and epilogues, but invented decorations and stage properties, contrived dresses, and made with her own needle and cut out with her own scissors all sorts of fantastic accessories.

In 1775 Mrs. Barbauld produced her 'Devotional Pieces.'

In 1777 her brother, yielding to the long-expressed wish of Mr. and Mrs. Barbauld, gave up to them his third son, Charles, as the child of their adoption, who was then less than two years old, and continued, to the end of their lives, to regard them with filial duty and affection. Little Charles was a fresh incentive to mental activity, and for his benefit she composed those 'Early Lessons' which have been so extensively useful. Her mind was remarkably practical: she was, in the strictest sense of the term, a clever woman, and has never been surpassed in the art of devising and fitting means to effect a proposed end. This book, and her great success in educational training, induced many persons to entreat her to take charge of their young children. Ever willing to do good, and to lighten the burden of maintenance and future provision to her sensitive and anxious husband, she yielded to these solicitations and received several little boys as her peculiar pupils. Among them Lord Denman and Sir William Gell reflected honour in after days upon their instructress.

To awaken and direct the devotional feelings of her little Charles and his companions, she composed her 'Hymns in Prose,' which indicate a marvellously-exact acquaintance with human nature in its infant unfoldings. It is observable that all the very best books for the nursery, and the dearest favourites there, approve themselves to the judgment and interest the feelings of the most intelligent men.

Lord Daer, the three other sons of the Earl of Selkirk,

and many youths of noble families, were among the Barbaulds' parlour-boarders at Palgrave, retained through life the warmest gratitude towards their instructors, and gave them many proofs of their personal friendship.

Mrs. Barbauld's health was strong, she liked active exercise, and was a great pedestrian. She had not the nervous sensibility which usually belongs to the temperament of genius, and for many years she sustained the spirits of her husband in their mutual toils for independence. They won not only a pecuniary meed but large accessions of fame and honour. The vacations were spent in visiting their friends in different parts of the country, or in London, where they were welcomed by the best society, both literary and fashionable.

Mrs. Montagu, always retaining her early admiration for Mrs. Barbauld, introduced her to all the most eminent persons of the time. Her conversation was appreciated even among those who made talking well the main business of their lives, and, notwithstanding her shyness, it yielded up the varied wealth of her fertile and richly-cultivated mind. So great was the ductility of that mind and so various were the forms and colours it could assume, while true to its own essential nature, as to remind one of Speusippus, the Greek philosopher, who set up images of the Graces in the Temple of the Muses, became renowned among the learned as the first investigator of the connection between the physical sciences, and popular among his fellow-countrymen as the first inventor of the art of making a very convenient sort of basket out of bundles of twigs.

At the end of eleven laborious years Mrs. Barbauld found that her husband's delicate health and depressed spirits, and her own weary frame, required an absolute cessation from exertion. They determined on quitting

Palgrave, intending, by an interval of relaxation, to re-create and afterwards brace themselves for renewed efforts. In the autumn of 1785 they left England, and landing at Calais travelled thence to Geneva, and spent the winter in the south of France. In the spring of 1786 they again set forth, and, after a long sojourn in Paris, returned to England in June, and passed the remainder of the year chiefly in London. In 1787, a Unitarian congregation at Hampstead having invited Mr. Barbauld to be their minister, he fixed his home there and took a few pupils, while Mrs. Barbauld acted as daily governess to a young lady in the vicinity. In 1790 she published her 'Address to the Opposers of the Corporation and Test Acts;' in 1791; her 'Poetical Epistle to Mr. Wilberforce,' and in 1792, her 'Remarks on Gilbert Wakefield's Inquiry.' In the year 1792 also her brother brought out the first volume of the 'Evenings at Home.' Mrs. Barbauld contributed fourteen pieces to the whole work. The world stands indebted to their joint labour for some of the earliest and most successful attempts ever made to diffuse among the people that knowledge of scientific truths which had previously been the exclusive property of professional students. This was done in a manner well calculated to enlarge the understanding while amusing the fancy of their readers, rendering recondite information a source at once of improvement and pleasure. They aimed at teaching things, at conveying the tested results of careful inquiry, in such a way that the reader might, as far as possible, realize facts, instead of committing to memory a mere set of words.

In 1793 Mrs. Barbauld published 'Sins of Government, Sins of the Nation.' In 1795 she wrote a critical essay, which was prefixed to an illustrated edition of Akenside's

'Pleasures of Imagination,' and another in 1797, which was prefixed to an illustrated edition of the 'Odes of Collins.'

In the year 1802 Mr. Barbauld resigned his ministerial charge at Hampstead for one at Newington Green, in order that his wife might enjoy the society of her brother and his family, who had settled in that neighbourhood.

In 1804 Mrs. Barbauld published, in three volumes, 'A Selection from the Spectator, Tatler, Guardian, and Freeholder,' with a preliminary essay, which is deemed the best of her literary criticisms. Her next occupation, undertaken at the request of several friends, was the examination and arrangement of 'Richardson's Letters' and those of his correspondents, which she published in six volumes, preceded by a memoir and review of his works, deemed by competent judges far to exceed in worth all the other contents.

Mr. Barbauld had suffered for many years under a morbid melancholy, amounting to insanity, an hereditary malady: she had unremittingly watched, soothed, and cheered him, with vigilant care and tenderness, and when he died, on the 11th of November, 1808, she bewailed the loss of her first object of earthly devotion. In an obituary notice, which appeared in 'The Monthly Repository,' she did justice to his talents and acquirements, to his benevolent and amiable qualities, and to the unworldliness and noble simplicity of his character; adding, that in his pulpit exhortations, "he did not speak the language of any party nor exactly coincide with the systems of any." Like most of his persuasion, he was a Universalist.

Her poems bear many traces of her tender, true, and fervent attachment to her husband. In the lines addressed to him accompanying 'A Map of the Land of Matrimony,'

which she had invented, comparing the lover to a sailor she inquires—

"And say, the land through Fancy's glass descried,
The bright Elysian fields her pencil drew,
Has time the dear idea realized?
Or are her optics false, her tints untrue?

Oh, say they are not! Though life's ceaseless cares,
Life's ceaseless toils demand thy golden hours,
Tell her glad heart whose hand these lines confess,
That Peace resides in Hymen's happy bowers."

The lines addressed to him November 14, 1778, reveal how pleasantly she amused his intervals of leisure. The 'Dirge' of November, 1808, shows how she loved and mourned him.

After Mr. Barbauld's death, she sought employment as a refuge from sadness, and edited a selection of 'The British Novelists,' for which she wrote an introductory essay and biographical and critical notices, distinguished by good taste and accurate judgment. This edition came out in 1810. In the following year she compiled and published 'The Female Speaker,' and produced 'Eighteen Hundred and Eleven,' a poem which excited stormy opposition and even "contumely and insult," by the melancholy view which it presented of England's political situation, and the mournful forebodings of the country's impending ruin in which she ventured to indulge.

Accustomed to popular favour she deeply felt the temporary loss of it, and never again could be persuaded to publish any of the compositions which her fertile mind continued occasionally to produce, confining their circulation to the homes of attached friends.

It is interesting to remark the social links which unite passing generations; to find Mrs. Barbauld writing verses in her youth to the memory of Mrs. Rowe, and aspiring to emulate her piety; associating with Dr. Price, Dr.

Priestley, and Dr. Enfield; with Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Carter, and Mrs. Chapone; with Coleridge, Joanna Baillie, Hannah More, and the sisterhood of Barley Wood, at different periods of her history.

Her last years were peaceful and happy. The brilliancy of her mind remained unclouded to the last.

Her judicious biographer, Lucy Aikin, has remarked that — "In youth the power of her imagination was counterbalanced by the activity of her intellect, which exercised itself in rapid, but not unprofitable, excursions over almost every field of knowledge. In age, when this activity abated, imagination appeared to exert over her an undiminished sway."

The prevalence of this faculty was evinced alike by her writings, her conversation, and her increasing delight in the society of the young, especially if they were beautiful.

In December, 1822, Dr. John Aikin, her only near relation and dearest friend, died of a lingering decline, and left her to the loneliness of heart which the survivors of the companions of their youth must experience. Her sister-in-law, her adopted son, his family, and other descendants of her brother, together with many attached and admiring friends, still felt her extraordinary powers of interesting and pleasing, and cheered her with affectionate attentions. She ever was uprightly and sincerely what her high moral principles taught her to be: her benevolence, always great, augmented to the last, and the sorrows and infirmities of lengthened life softened and elevated her noble heart more and more.

An asthma wore her strength gently down, by almost imperceptible degrees, inability for exertion subsided into languor, and, on the 9th of March, 1825, she passed away in the eighty-second year of her age.

As a writer, Mrs. Barbauld was distinguished by extensive and exact knowledge, by sagacious and acute powers of original thought, a lively and inventive fancy, a copious treasury of English diction, a correct application of words, and a polished brightness of style more generally attained by the masculine than feminine intellect. Her Essay 'Against Inconsistency in our Expectations' is an admirable and spirited piece of reasoning; worthy, in acumen, experience of human life, and able execution, of John Foster himself. Her Essay 'On Monastic Institutions' would do credit, not in the inculcation of principles, but in comprehensive grasp and rhetorical power, to a University Professor of Modern History. Her subtle discrimination and skill in analysis show themselves advantageously in 'An Inquiry into those kinds of Distress which excite agreeable Sensations:' to which is appended the beautiful allegory of 'Pity.'

Her 'Essay on Prejudice' is an able piece of reasoning. 'The Hill of Science' might have passed unquestioned by the keenest critics as an allegory worthy of Addison's elegant mind, and of winning even for him additional glory.

Mrs. Barbauld's letters to her brother are as well written, as full of courtesy and pleasant anecdotes, of wit, and thought, as if elaborately composed for the perusal of a Montagu or a Johnson. Themes of worth and masterly diction belonged to her easiest and most familiar intercourse, and all were interspersed with airy brightness of fancy, which gave beauty to every tiny mote it touched in passing by.

In September, 1787, she makes a remark, which, trifling in itself, marks the history of habitudes in England. "Did you ever see *seguars*—leaf tobacco rolled up, of the length

of one's finger, which they light and smoke without a pipe? He [a young Spaniard] uses them."

In 1791, she relates that Mrs. Montagu, having invited the Marchioness de Boufflers and her daughter to dinner, "After making her wait till six, the Marchioness came, and made an apology for her daughter, that, just as she was going to dress, she was seized with a *dégoût momentanée du monde*, and could not wait on her." Thus, with facility, she caught and communicated the spirit of variety and whim to enliven grave dissertation.

In a letter of still earlier date—February 9, 1786—written from Aix to her brother, the following passage refers to Mesmeric practices, which for the last ten years (1850-60) have been fashionable favourites in England:—"If you have a mind to strike a good stroke in London, introduce magnetism; it is in France the folly of the day. There is a society at Marseilles for that purpose composed of gentlemen. They boast they can lay asleep when they please, and for as long as they please; and that during this sleep, or trance, the mind can see the operations going forward in the corporeal machine, and predict future events. One of them offered to try his skill on Mr. Barbauld; but, after a long and unpleasant operation of rubbing the temples and forehead, he was obliged to desist without success. Mr. Howard* will tell you, however, they operate better at Lyons, as he saw several women at the hospital put to sleep in a minute by only passing the hand over the forehead."†

The pseudo-romantic fragment called 'Sir Bertrand,' long believed to have been Mrs. Barbauld's, is assigned by

* The Philanthropist.

† See 'Works of Mrs. Barbauld, with a Memoir by Lucy Aikin,' 2 vols. 8vo.

Miss Lucy Aikin to Dr. Aikin. Her poems are all of them imbued with indisputable taste and genius. In the form of each, perhaps, may be discerned a likeness to some preceding composition of great excellence, written by a contemporary or predecessor: yet no servile copies or plagiarisms occur. Take, for instance, her Odes to Spring and to Content, evidently suggested by the Odes of Collins, and wrought out upon his plan in her own way, and according to the free tenor of her own thoughts.

'The Mouse's Petition,' known by heart to half the population of England, unfit as it is for children, has, in spite of the dissertation on the transmigration of souls, so much lively sense, compassionate feeling, and cleverness, that it continues a general favourite. The watchword Liberty, at the period of its first publication, tended to promote its popularity. The poor little creature which is supposed to utter the petition was kept all night in a trap by Dr. Priestley, that he might try experiments upon it with the different sorts of air which he had discovered.

A few of her songs are not free from the blameable manner of expression usual among authors in her early days when writing on amatory subjects.

In her poem called 'Eighteen Hundred and Eleven,' foreboding her country's fall, Mrs. Barbauld has anticipated for Anglo-Americans such a survey of its ruins as Lord Macaulay deputes to a New Zealander.

"Yet then the ingenuous youth whom Fancy fires
With pictured glories of illustrious sires,
With duteous zeal their pilgrimage shall take
From the Blue Mountains or Ontario's Lake,
With fond adoring steps to press the sod
By statesmen, sages, poets, heroes trod;
On Isis' banks to draw inspiring air;
From Runymede to send the patriot's prayer;
In pensive thought where Cam's slow waters wind
To meet those shades that ruled the realms of mind;

In silent halls to sculptured marbles bow,
And hang fresh wreaths round Newton's awful brow.
Oft shall they seek some peasant's homely shed,
Who toils unconscious of the mighty dead,
To ask where Avon's winding waters stray,
And thence a knot of wild flowers bear away;
Anxious inquire where Clarkson, friend of man,
Or all-accomplished Jones his race began;
If of the modest mansion aught remains
Where Heaven and Nature prompted Cowper's strains;
Where Roscoe, to whose patriot breast belong
The Roman virtue and the Tuscan song,
Led Ceres to the bleak and barren moor
Where Ceres never gained a wreath before:
With curious search their pilgrim steps shall rove
By many a ruined tower and proud alcove,
Shall listen for those strains that soothed of yore
Thy rock, stern Skiddaw; and thy fall, Lodore;
Feast with Dun Edin's classic brow their sight,
And, 'visit Melross by the pale moonlight.'
But who their mingled feelings shall pursue
When London's faded glories rise to view?
The mighty city, which by every road
In floods of people poured itself abroad;
Ungirt by walls, irregularly great,
No jealous drawbridge, and no closing gate."

Not the incident of the peasant only, but the whole tone and tenor of this highly-finished poem may certainly be traced to Mrs. Barbauld's acquaintance with the Latin poets and historians, and with those of ancient Greece. The lines—

"I see the long and linked chain of woes
Rippling the deep and drawing on my Troy
Wide-wasting storms and deluges of flame;"

from Lord Royston's translation of Lycophron's 'Cassandra,' might have made no inappropriate motto for her inauspicious prognostications: but, happily, her fate and that of Priam's daughter were reversed; the contemporaries of the Princess scorned to believe the truths she uttered: the contemporaries of the schoolmistress were alarmed by her erroneous denunciations. The Rip Van Winkle of our own time, the Seven Sleepers of the

Middle Ages, and the Cretan Epimenides, all seem to have derived their somniferous being from that desire after a knowledge of approximating futurity which is inherent in human nature; that all-pervading self-consciousness of spiritual immortality, which, fully assured that it shall then be, longs also to be then capable of knowing the issues and effects of those things with whose embryo and early growth it has been conversant.

The pathos of the following lines few hearts can resist:—

THE DEATH OF THE VIRTUOUS.

"Sweet is the scene when virtue dies!
When sinks a righteous soul to rest,
How mildly beam the closing eyes,
How gently heaves the expiring breast!

So fades a summer cloud away;
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er;
So gently shuts the eye of day;
So dies a wave along the shore.

Triumphant shines the victor's brow,
Fanned by some angel's purple wing;
Where is, oh Grave, thy victory now?
And where, insidious Death, thy sting?

Farewell, conflicting joys and fears,
Where light and shade alternate dwell;
How bright the unchanging morn appears!
Farewell! inconstant world, farewell!

Its duty done, as sinks the clay,
Light from its load the spirit flies;
While heaven and earth combine to say,
Sweet is the scene when virtue dies!"

Many of her hymns are fine specimens of devotional poetry. In the first of them, which expresses only what philosophical deists of any age or country might feel, there are some admirable passages, and the four concluding lines are deeply impressive:—

"Cease, cease your songs, the daring flight control,
Revere Him in the stillness of the soul;
With silent duty meekly bend before Him,
And deep within your inmost hearts adore Him."

The second is an able paraphrase of Habakkuk, iii. 17, 18:—"Although the fig-tree shall not blossom," &c.

The third, 'For Easter Sunday,' if two half lines were expunged, would be altogether excellent. The objectionable words look like a guarded and subsequent interpolation of the sectarian Shibboleth. The devotional spirit, the faith, hope, and charity of the verses breathe essential Christianity. Few worshippers in the Established Church of England are unacquainted with the animating strain—

"Again the Lord of Life and Light,"

and fewer still suspect its origin, or detect its alterations.

Her 4th hymn is likewise used in orthodox congregations, and contains only one suspicious phrase.

The 5th manifests a painful acquaintance with the besetting temptations of human life, and might serve as a song in Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress.' It has faults of omission, but is good as far as it goes.

The 6th, 'Pious Friendship,' is very beautiful:—

"How blest the sacred tie that binds
In union sweet according minds!
How swift the heavenly course they run,
Whose hearts, whose faith and hope are one!

To each, the soul of each how dear,
What jealous love, what holy fear!
How doth the generous flame within
Refine from earth and cleanse from sin!

Their streaming tears together flow
For human guilt and mortal woe;
Their ardent prayers together rise,
Like mingling flames in sacrifice.

Together both they seek the place
Where God reveals his awful face;
How high, how strong, their raptures swell,
There 's none but kindred souls can tell.

Nor shall the glowing flame expire
When nature droops her sickening fire;
Then shall they meet in realms above,
A heaven of joy—because of love."

The 7th, 'Come, said Jesus' sacred voice,' is a touching paraphrase of the Saviour's invitation to suffering and weary sinners.

The 8th hymn, 'Lo, where a crowd of pilgrims toil,' could have been written only by a person earnestly intent on passing through earthly probation to heaven. Dr. Priestley would certainly have disapproved of the line—

"Our country is Emmanuel's land,"

for Mrs. Barbauld was much too well informed to use that name in ignorance of its meaning.

The 9th, 'Joy to the followers of the Lord!' is full of the heart's deep and seldom uttered experience of bodily affliction and spiritual peace, entering even into the martyr's tortures, when—

"The throbbing pulse beats high
To rapture mixed with agony.

A tenderer, softer, form it wears,
Dissolved in love, dissolved in tears,
When humble souls a Saviour greet,
And sinners clasp the mercy-seat.

'T is joy e'en here, a budding flower,
Struggling with snows, and storm, and shower,
And waits the moment to expand,
Transplanted to its native land."

The Pastoral Hymn, No. 10, 'Gentle Pilgrim, tell me why,' and the Sabbath Hymns 11 and 12, complete the series, which is unequalled in merit by any devotional poems of her female predecessors and contemporaries.

The Life, Letters, and Poems of Mrs. Barbauld incite and enforce the conviction that her own religious belief was in reality more scriptural and orthodox than the tenets usually held by her sect; that she did acknowledge the heinous guilt of sin in the heart's declension from God, did rely upon the Divine Atonement, and did experience that renovating influence of the Divine Spirit, which is

righteousness, peace, and joy immortal. Her essay entitled 'Thoughts on the Devotional Tastes of Sects and Establishments,' is remarkable not only for its great ability, but for that glaring inconsistency between her doctrinal notions and her fervent devotional feelings, which runs through all her religious writings. Her heart could not receive the dogmas which her biassed mind adopted. Her notional religion was Unitarian, her experimental piety was Trinitarian, and true Christianity.

Lady Anne Barnard.

Lady Anne Lindsay, eldest daughter of James, fifth Earl of Balcarres, was born December 8, 1750, was married in 1793, to Sir Andrew Barnard, librarian to King George III., and died childless May 8, 1825.

Among the few poems which she wrote was the ballad of 'Auld Robin Gray,' which she composed, about the year 1771, to an ancient Scottish air. It became popular immediately, but Lady Anne kept her authorship a secret for fifty years, and then revealed it in a letter to a very suitable confessor, Sir Walter Scott. In the early days of Lady Anne the prevalence of female authorship in the middle classes had provoked aristocratic prejudices against it, and high-born women were considered to degrade themselves when assuming the position of those whom circumstances subjected to their patronage. Hence, doubtless, arose the motive for concealment; and to the change in public opinion wrought by the passing of half a century may probably be traced Lady Anne's final avowal.

Auld Robin Gray.

"When the sheep are in the fauld, and the kye at hame,
And a' the warld to sleep are gane,
The waes o' my heart fa' in showers frae my ee,
When my gudeman lies sound by me.

Young Jamie loo'd me weel, and socht me for his bride,
But saving a crown he had naething else beside;
To mak that crown a pund my Jamie gaed to sea,
And the crown and the pund were baith for me.

He hadna been awa a week but only twa,
When mother she fell sick, and the cow was stown awa,
My father brak his arm, and young Jamie at the sea,
And auld Robin Gray cam' a courtin' me.

My father couldna work, and my mother couldna spin,
I toiled day and nicht, but their bread I couldna win,
Auld Rob maintained them baith, and wi' tears in his ee,
Said, Jenny, for their sakes, oh, marry me!

My heart it said Nay, for I looked for Jamie back,
But the wind it blew high, and the ship it was a wreck;
The ship it was a wreck,—why didna Jamie dee?
Or why do I live to say, Wae's me!

My father argued sair, my mother didna speak,
But she lookit in my face till my heart was like to break,
Sae they gied him my hand, though my heart was in the sea,
And auld Robin Gray was gudeman to me.

I hadna been a wife a week but only four,
When sitting sae mournfully at the door,
I saw my Jamie's wraith, for I couldna think it he,
Till he said, I've come back for to marry thee.

Oh, sair did we greet, and muckle did we say,
We took but ae kiss, and we tore ourselves away,
I wish I were dead, but I'm no like to dee,
And why do I live to say, Wae's me!

I gang like a ghaist, and I carena to spin,
I daurna think on Jamie, for that wad be a sin,
But I'll do my best a gude wife to be,
For auld Robin Gray is kind unto me."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE POETESSES.

A.D. 1825-1833.

Helen-Maria Williams — The Margravine of Anspach.

"Each interval of night,
Was graced with many an undulating light."
COWPER'S 'Table Talk.'

HELEN-MARIA WILLIAMS.

THE author of this Essay regrets that she can add very few particulars to the scanty and vague accounts of Helen-Maria Williams, given in the Biographical Dictionaries. Time and trouble have not been spared, and many probable sources of information have been searched in vain. The following are the generally received facts of her personal history. She was a native of the northern part of England, and born in the year 1762. Dr. Kippis was her early friend, and he first ushered her into the literary world. Craik, in his 'Sketches,' mentions Helen-Maria Williams as having published some volumes of verse in 1782, and the two or three following years. Her 'Edward and Eltrada,' 'Various Poems,' and 'Julia, a Novel,' belong to this period.

In 1790, she was living in Paris; and in 1794, being still there, she suffered imprisonment, and narrowly escaped the guillotine, by which many of her most intimate friends of the Girondist party suffered death. Being released, she

fled to Switzerland, and remained there until 1796, when she returned to Paris. Her 'Letters from France,' detailing the progress of the first French revolution, excited great contemporary interest. In the Fourth Letter of her 'Sketches of Manners and Opinions in the French Republic towards the close of the XVIIIth century,' published in 1801, she relates the sudden death of a beloved sister, gifted with most amiable qualities, and possessing many accomplishments; leaving a family of little children, and a sorrowing husband and mother: and she also mentions the arrangements made to secure a separate grave and Christian rites, at a period when democratic frenzy allotted all the corpses of a district to be cast into a common burial pit.

From the same volumes it appears that Helen-Maria Williams was fond of riding on horseback, kept the best company, and interested herself, heart and soul, in the course of those fearful political occurrences which shook the states of the European continent like a succession of earthquakes. Conversant with the ancient and modern history and geography of Europe, seeing and treading the localities of many of the most memorable events of her troublous times, and obtaining a knowledge of political conjunctures, either as an eye-witness, or from persons who took part in them, she was enabled to draw some curious historical parallels, to note down anecdotes and witticisms, and to relate the course and current of events, in a style distinguished by correctness and perspicuity of expression, often rising into eloquence, and always full of earnestness.

In 1815 she published her 'Narrative of Events in France.' On the 15th of December, 1827, she died at Paris.*

* See 'Annual Register,' 1827, p. 262.

Besides the works already named, she wrote and published a translation of the 'Personal Narrative' of Humboldt and Bonpland.

The following verses, perhaps her best, are now printed from an autograph copy, which was for many years the property of Sydney Lady Morgan. None but an eye-witness, susceptible of receiving, and capable of communicating the impressions of nature's sublimest aspects, could have written them.

A HYMN. WRITTEN AMONG THE ALPS.

"Creation's God! with thought elate
Thy hand divine I see,
Impressed on scenes where all is great,
Where all is full of Thee!

Where stern the Alpine mountains raise
Their heads of massive snow,
Whence on the rolling storm I gaze
That hangs how far below!

Where on some bold stupendous height
The eagle sits alone,
Or soaring wings his sullen flight
To haunts yet more his own;

Where the sharp rock the chamois treads,
Or slippery summit scales,
Or where the whitening snow-bird spreads
Her plumes to icy gales;

Where the rude cliff's steep column glows
With morning's tint of blue,
Or evening on the glacier throws
The rose's blushing hue;

Or where by twilight's softer light
The mountain-shadow bends,
And sudden casts a partial night
As black its form descends;

Where the full ray of noon alone
Down the deep valley falls;
Or where the sunbeam never shone
Between its rifted walls;

Where cloudless regions calm the soul,
Bid mortal cares be still,
Can passion's wayward wish control
And rectify the will;

Where 'midst some vast expanse the mind,
Which swelling virtue fires,
Forgets that earth it leaves behind
And to its heaven aspires;

Where far along the desert sphere
Resounds no creature's call,
And undisturbing mortal ear
The avalanches fall;

Where rushing from their snowy source,
The daring torrents urge
Their loud-ton'd waters' headlong course,
And lift their feather'd surge;

Where swift the lines of light and shade
Flit o'er the lucid lake,
Or the shrill winds its breast invade,
And its green billows wake;

Where on the slope, with speckled dye,
The pigmy herds I scan,
Or sooth'd, the scattered châlets spy,
The last abodes of man;

Or where the flocks refuse to pass,
And the lone peasant mows,
Fixed on his knees, the pendent grass,
Which down the steep he throws;

Or where the dang'rous pathway leads
High o'er the gulf profound,
From whence the shrinking eye recedes,
Nor finds repose around;

Where red the mountain-ash reclines
Along the clefted rock,
Where firm the dark unbending pines
The howling tempest mock;

Where, level with the ice-ribb'd bound,
The yellow harvests glow,
Or vales with purple vines are wound
Beneath impending snow;

Where the rich minerals catch the ray,
With varying lustre bright,
And glittering fragments strew the way
With sparks of liquid light;

Or where the moss forbears to creep,
Where loftier summits rear
Their untrod snows, and frozen sleep
Locks all the uncoloured year;

In every scene, where every hour
Sheds some terrific grace,
In nature's vast o'erwhelming power,
Thee, Thee, my God, I trace!

So let me in the moral scene
Thy hand directing see,
And 'midst its darkest tempest lean
With confidence on Thee!

'Midst earth's vain joys or passing woes,
Alike in good or ill,
Be the first bliss my bosom knows
Submission to Thy will."

Elizabeth Margravine of Anspach.

The Lady Elizabeth Berkeley, youngest daughter of Augustus, fourth Earl of Berkeley, was born in December, 1750. Her father died when she was only four years old, and her mother, a daughter of Henry Drax, Esq., of Charborough, married Robert Earl Nugent, three years afterwards. Lady Elizabeth had consequently almost an orphan's lot, and wanted that tender home training of the affections for which there is no compensation.

On the 2nd of May, 1767, being little more than sixteen years of age, this clever and accomplished girl was married to William Craven, Esq., who, two years afterwards succeeded to his uncle's peerage as sixth Baron Craven. Seven children, three sons and four daughters, were the offspring of this marriage. Lady Craven was beautiful and amiable, her manners were fascinating, and her powers of varying and enlivening the monotony of daily existence by the activity of her inventive faculties were admirable.

Her Autobiography, superficially and evasively written, assumes an air of simplicity worthy of an avowed imitator of the guileless innocence of her aunt Lady Suffolk's manner, and throws little true light upon the cause of her domestic disquietudes. From other sources, however, it is evident that if Lord Craven had his faults, Lady Craven was not devoid of her provoking eccentricities; and the separation which ensued in 1781, after thirteen years of

wedded union, cast discredit alike upon her conjugal and maternal character.

Lady Craven, on resigning her domestic offices, made a tour on the continent of Europe, and through several parts of Asia, sojourning at Paris, Madrid, Lisbon, Vienna, Berlin, Warsaw, St. Petersburgh, Rome, Florence, Naples, and Anspach.

In 1787, she descended into the grotto of Antiparos, being the first woman known to have hazarded that achievement. In 1789, she published a series of letters relating her Travels through the Crimea to Constantinople.

On the 26th of September, 1791, Lord Craven died; and on the 13th of October, in the same year, his widow married His Serene Highness Christian-Frederick, Margrave of Brandenburgh, Anspach, and Bayreuth, who, having sold his small sovereignty to his kinsman the King of Prussia, came with his wife to live in England. At their well-known place of abode at Hammersmith, called Brandenburgh House, amusement constituted the sole business of life. He had a passionate fondness for horses, and a secondary fondness for the drama. The Margravine built a private theatre, wrote plays and operas, and delighted in all the preliminaries of stage exhibition; as well as in assembling around her multitudes of fashionable people to applaud her devices, and to yield compensatory homage for her exclusion from the British Court.

In December, 1805, the Margrave died. After this event the Margravine left England, and alleviated her grief by change of scene.

In 1825, she published her 'Memoirs.' In the society of her favourite son, the Hon. Keppel Craven, she spent her last years at Naples; inhabiting a villa which she had amused herself by building, and there she drew her last

breath, in the month of January, 1828, at the ripe age of seventy-seven. The best of her poems is 'The Fairy's Answer,' addressed to Mrs. Greville. Frances, daughter of James Macartney, Esq., married Fulke Greville, Esq., of Wilbury, Wiltshire, only son of Algernon, second son of Fulke Greville, fifth Baron Brooke. Mrs. Greville had five sons and one daughter, Frances-Anne, who inherited her mother's wit, and has won perpetual remembrance as "the beautiful Mrs. Crewe." In 1756, Mrs. Greville published a book called 'Maxims and Characters.' The only known survivor of her mental productions is:—

A PRAYER FOR INDIFFERENCE.

"Oft I've implored the gods in vain,
And pray'd till I've been weary,
For once I'll try my wish to gain
Of Oberon the fairy.

Sweet airy being, wanton sprite,
That lurk'st in woods unseen,
And oft by Cynthia's silver light
Trip'st gaily o'er the green;

If e'er thy pitying heart was mov'd,
As ancient stories tell,
And for th' Athenian maid who lov'd,
Thou sought'st a wondrous spell;

Oh! deign once more t' exert thy power;
Haply some herb or tree,
Sov'reign as juice of western flower,
Conceals a balm for me.

I ask no kind return of love,
No tempting charm to please:
Far from the heart those gifts remove,
That sighs for peace and ease.

Nor peace nor ease the heart can know,
Which, like the needle true,
Turns at the touch of joy or woe,
But, turning, trembles too.

Far as distress the soul can wound,
'T is pain in each degree:
'T' is bliss but to a certain bound;
Beyond is agony.

Take then this treacherous sense of mine,
Which dooms me still to smart:
Which pleasure can to pain refine:
To pains new pangs impart.

Oh, haste to shed the sacred balm!
My shatter'd nerves new string;
And for my guest, serenely calm,
The nymph Indifference bring.

At her approach, see Hope, see Fear,
See Expectation fly;
And Disappointment in the rear,
That blasts the promis'd joy.

The tear which Pity taught to flow,
The eye shall then disown;
The heart that melts for others' woe,
Shall then scarce feel its own.

The wounds which now each moment bleed,
Each moment then shall close,
And tranquil days shall still succeed
To nights of calm repose.

Oh fairy elf! but grant me this,
This one kind comfort send;
And so may never-fading bliss
Thy flow'ry paths attend.

So may the glow-worm's glimmering light
Thy tiny footsteps lead
To some new region of delight,
Unknown to mortal tread.

And be thy acorn goblet fill'd
With heaven's ambrosial dew;
From sweetest, freshest flow'rs distill'd,
That shed fresh sweets for you.

And what of life remains for me
I'll pass in sober ease;
Half pleas'd, contented will I be,
Content but half to please."

THE FAIRY'S ANSWER.

"Without preamble, to my friend
These hasty lines I'm bid to send,
Or give, if I am able;
I dare not hesitate to say—
Though I have trembled all the day,
It looks so like a fable—

Last night's adventure is my theme;
And should it strike you as a dream,
  Yet soon its high import
Must make you own the matter such,
So delicate, it were too much
  To be compos'd in sport.

Fair Luna shone serenely bright,
And every star bedeck'd the night,
  While Zephyr fanned the trees:
No sound assail'd my mind's repose,
Save that yon stream, which murmuring flows,
  Still echo'd to the breeze.

Enwrapt in solemn thoughts I sate,
Revolving o'er the turns of fate,
  Yet void of hope or fear;
When lo! behold an airy throng,
With lightest steps, and jocund song,
  Surpris'd my eye and ear.

A form superior to the rest
His little voice to me addrest,
  And gently thus began:
'I've heard strange things from one of you,
Pray tell me if you think 't is true;
  Explain it if you can.

Such incense has perfumed my throne,
Such eloquence my heart has won,
  I think I guess the hand:
I know her wit and beauty too,
But why she sends a prayer so new
  I cannot understand.

To light some flames, and some revive,
To keep some others just alive,
  Full oft I am implor'd:
But, with peculiar power to please,
To supplicate for nought but ease,—
  'T is odd upon my word!

Tell her, with fruitless care I've sought,
And though my realms, with wonders fraught,
  In remedies abound,
No grain of cold Indifference
Was ever yet allied to Sense,
  In all my Fairy round.

The regions of the sky I'd trace,
I'd ransack every earthly place,
  Each leaf, each herb, each flower,
To mitigate the pangs of Fear,
Dispel the clouds of black Despair,
  Or lull the restless hour.

I would be generous as I'm just,
But I obey, as others must,
  Those laws which Fate has made;
My tiny kingdom how defend,
And what might be the horrid end,
  Should man my state invade.

'T would put your mind into a rage,
And such unequal war to wage
  Suits not my regal duty!
I dare not change a first decree,
She's doom'd to please, nor can be free—
  Such is the lot of beauty!'

This said, he darted o'er the plain,
And after follow'd all his train;
  No glimpse of him I find;
But sure I am, the little sprite
These words, before he took his flight,
  Imprinted on my mind."

CHAPTER XV.

THE POETESSES.

A.D. 1833—SEPTEMBER.

Hannah More.

"Our province is virtue and religion, life and manners; the science of improving the temper and making the heart better. This is the field assigned us to cultivate."—Bishop Butler's Sermon 'Upon the Ignorance of Man.'

HANNAH MORE.

GRANGER, in his 'Biographical History of England' (vol. i. p. 288), quoting from Holland's 'Heroologia,' mentions that "the Rev. Mr. John More of Norwich, one of the worthiest clergymen in the reign of Elizabeth, gave the best reason that could be given for wearing the longest and largest beard of any Englishman of his time, namely, that no act of his life might be unworthy of the gravity of his appearance." Whether Jacob More could claim kindred with this sage of venerable aspect does not appear, but he also was a Norfolk man, a descendant of the Presbyterian family of the Mores of Harleston. He received the education of a scholar, and his prospects in life being marred by the adverse decision of a lawsuit he left his native county, and, after having acted for some time in the capacity of a supervisor of excise at Bristol, obtained the mastership of the Free School at Fishponds, a hamlet

of the parish of Stapleton, in the county of Gloucester, and soon afterwards espoused Mary Grace, the daughter of a respectable farmer in that vicinity, who was, like himself, remarkable for religious principles, sound sense, prudent management, and attachment to the Church of England. Five daughters were the issue of this marriage—Mary, born in 1738; Elizabeth, born in 1740; Sarah, born in 1743; HANNAH, born on the 2nd of February, 1745; and Martha, born in 1749: the hamlet of Fishponds being the native place of the sisterhood. The father educated all his daughters with a view to their future occupation as schoolmistresses. They all had strong minds, sagacious intellects, and superior capacities for the acquisition of knowledge. Mary was distinguished for a rigid adherence to the dictates of right reason, and for indomitable strength of will: Elizabeth was of a more compliant nature, prudent, reserved, and possessing a peculiar faculty for orderly and methodical domestic management: Sarah was full of enterprise and of vivacious and joyous spirits, evincing also considerable talents for literature: Martha had the best abilities of the four sisters, and combined in herself the chief excellencies of their several characters; indefatigable and cheerful activity was her distinctive attribute.

Hannah More's precocity of mind was extraordinary: listening to the lessons which were taught to her elder sisters, she learned them for herself without apparent effort, and made rhymes at four years old. Her nurse had formerly lived in the family of Dryden the poet, and Hannah took great delight in hearing stories related of his sayings and doings. From her father's recital she learned, instead of fairy tales, the most striking incidents of Grecian and Roman history, anecdotes from 'Plutarch's Lives,' and many of that philosopher's wise axioms.

The advantage of being a younger child enabled her to imbibe with facility all the atoms of information floating in the healthy, moral atmosphere of her home. Literary ambition manifested itself with the earliest exercise of reason, and prevailed even in her sports; her favourite amusement being to make fictitious journeys to London upon a chair, in order to converse with bishops and booksellers, the earliest idols of her imagination. Her father instructed her in the Latin language, and in the elements of mathematics, until alarmed at her progress, lest she should become that dreaded monster a learned woman, he ceased for a while to act as her preceptor, and could with difficulty be persuaded by his less prejudiced wife to allow the eager child to pursue her studious course. The wish to teach as well as to learn was early evinced by Hannah More; and no sooner had she acquired the art of penmanship than she seized upon all the scraps of paper that fell in her way and covered them with moral essays, verses, and letters of admonition to supposititious culprits.

Mary More was sent at stated intervals to a French school at Bristol, four miles off, where she steadily applied herself to make the best of her advantages, and day by day, or week by week, carried home what she learned, and used the intermediate hours in imparting a knowledge of the French language to her sisters. The society of several French officers, prisoners of war on parole, who occasionally visited Mr. More's dinner-table, afforded the sisters still further opportunities of attaining fluency in French conversation.

The superior abilities, religious principles, and excellent conduct of these five sisters attracted the notice and secured the esteem of the chief persons resident in their neighbourhood, and it is probable that pecuniary assistance was prof-

fered and accepted to assist the enterprising girls in the establishment of a boarding-school. In 1757, Mary More, being then nineteen years of age, took a house in Trinity-street, Bristol, and, with her sisters Elizabeth and Sarah as coadjutors, and Hannah and Martha as pupils for a time, commenced the most successful career in the records of feminine school-keeping. At this important era of Hannah More's existence she had attained the age of twelve years: she sedulously availed herself of the instructions of masters in the Italian and Spanish languages, and in other accomplishments, and pursued with avidity every possible means of mental and moral self-improvement. One of the first books which attracted her mind was 'The Spectator,' that beacon of literary taste and social directory of English-women. An odd volume of Richardson's 'Pamela,' met with by accident, is also supposed to have excited her early interest for fictitious narrative.

A linendraper named Peach, who had made the acquaintance of David Hume, during that eminent writer's two years' residence in Bristol, and was subsequently entrusted with the task of striking out the Scotticisms in the first edition of his history, became the critical guide of Hannah More's English studies; and to him she ever acknowledged herself to be indebted for the inculcation of just principles of composition and the formation of a correct literary style.

Years passed on, the school prospered, and Hannah and Martha More rose from the pupils' forms to the place of teachers and part-proprietors of the establishment.

Hannah's knowledge of the physical sciences was chiefly derived from James Ferguson. He was in the habit of lecturing at Bristol upon astronomy and mechanics. The Miss Mores admired his wonderful abilities, and the energy

with which he imparted the scientific truths wrought out and acquired by his self-taught mind. Hannah took especial pleasure in his instructive conversation, and he, discerning her taste and acumen, submitted all his subsequent writings to her criticism before publication.

In the year 1763, Mr. Sheridan delivered at Bristol a course of lectures upon rhetoric: Hannah More, then seventeen years of age, enchanted with a new opportunity of personal improvement, addressed to him a copy of complimentary verses. Acquaintance ensued, and Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan and their highly-gifted son, Richard Brinsley, were soon added permanently to the number of her friends. To the lessons in elocution then and subsequently received from Mr. Sheridan it is probable that both Sarah and Hannah More were indebted for the remarkable elegance with which they read aloud. The powers of Hannah in recitation were also admirable.

It was then the custom in female boarding-schools to have plays occasionally represented, in which the sentiments and manners were frequently incongruous with the delicate proprieties belonging to the pupils who performed them. Like most other clever women, Hannah More had in early life a strong predilection for dramatic exhibitions; she cherished the belief that the stage might be made a powerful instrument in effecting the moral improvement of society, and the didactic spirit of her family and occupation was strong within her. Obeying these impulses she wrote, in the year 1763, when only eighteen years of age, 'The Search after Happiness, a Pastoral Drama for Young Ladies.'

'The Search after Happiness' acquired extensive circulation in manuscript, and spread far and wide the fame of the author and the reputation of the school, which the

sisters conducted with hitherto unparalleled discretion and ability. At no other establishment could equal advantages of religious, moral, and mental instruction be obtained. The influx of scholars proved too great for the domicile, and the sisters consequently built for themselves a larger house on vacant ground, the first of the locality now well known as Park-street, Bristol. There they received sixty boarders, and might, if they would, have had as many more, the school being the most fashionable and prosperous in the kingdom.

In 1764, Sir James Stonhouse, the eminent physician, took Holy Orders, and, probably a little before that date, came with his second wife and family to reside at Bristol, in the same street with the Miss Mores. Appreciating their worth and talents, he introduced them at his house to the best society of the city and neighbourhood, among whom their good looks, agreeable manners, lively conversation, and total freedom from every sort and degree of artifice and affectation, made them general favourites. Sir James especially delighted in fostering the genius of Hannah; he directed her theological studies, and remained through life her almost paternal friend.

In 1765, occupying herself with the study of Italian literature, and making poetical translations for the improvement of her style, she enlarged and worked up Metastasio's opera of 'Attilio Regolo' into an English tragedy, to which she gave the title of 'The Inflexible Captive.' This alone of all her mere literary exercises, she deemed worthy of preservation. Several short pieces from other Italian poets, and from Spanish writers, were saved from oblivion by the friends of her youth, and evince a masterly facility.

All the sisters excelled in colloquial French, and

Sarah, as well as Hannah, spoke the Italian and Spanish languages fluently.

The candour with which the other four sisters admitted, asserted, and gloried in the superiority of Hannah, the subservience in which they held their own pretensions to notice, and the consistent self-denial with which they set themselves as foils to show off on all occasions her transcendent brilliancy, prove at once the soundness of their understandings, the nobleness of their hearts, and the strength of their family affection. She was the centre of their worldly hopes and fears, their first earthly object in life. Martha was pre-eminent in this devotion to Hannah, and Hannah repaid them all with cordial love, bore all her honours meekly, and led and joined her sisters in every benevolent act for which circumstances gave the opportunity. Gratitude to their parents was evinced by relieving them from labour, setting them free from care, and placing them in a comfortable house at Stony Hill, with two maid-servants to wait upon them, where the dutiful daughters could witness and enjoy the reflection of the happiness they bestowed.

The fatiguing monotony of their arduous employment was broken by spending the vacations at the houses of various friends. Hannah and her devoted "Patty" were frequently the guests of some pupils who made their home at Belmont, the seat of Edward Turner, Esq., and there Hannah's taste for landscape-gardening was elicited, alterations were made at her suggestion, and memorials erected, which, after the lapse of a century, still testify of her. A scene in those grounds, and a legend connected with it, afforded the materials for her poem, called 'The Bleeding Rock.' Mr. Turner of Belmont, a man of large fortune, and of an intellectual and honourable character,

though of a gloomy and capricious temper, was not insensible to the extraordinary attractions, moral, mental, and personal, of the gay and gentle Hannah More. In the year 1767, when she numbered twenty-two, and he forty-two years, he made her an offer of marriage. Tempted, perhaps, by the desire of independence and social position, or mistaking gratitude for love, she accepted it, resigned her partnership in the school, and laid up a large supply of expensive house-linen, clothes, and other appertainments of a country gentleman's bride. Three times, in the course of the six following years, the wedding-day was fixed, and as often postponed by her affianced husband. He would not give up the engagement, yet he hesitated to fulfil it. Thus, lingering in suspense, Hannah More's health and spirits failed; she saw that there could be no rational prospect of happiness with a man who could so cruelly trifle with her feelings; and yielding to the remonstrances of her sisters, came at last to a peremptory decision, and renounced the engagement. Against this Mr. Turner earnestly protested, declaring to Sir James Stonhouse, that he would marry her without further delay, at any hour, if she would but have him. Sanctioned by the opinion of Mrs. Gwatkin, and of all her best friends, Hannah More firmly adhered to her resolution, and rejected this proposal. By the interposition of Sir James, an amicable arrangement was at last effected, and Mr. Turner, at his own instance, and after repeated and urgent entreaties, was allowed to settle upon her an annuity of 200*l.* a-year; having offered one of triple the amount. The agitation and distress caused by Mr. Turner's conduct induced Hannah More to determine, with that infrangible strength of will which belonged to her mild yet noble character, that she would never again listen to matri-

monial proposals. Her resolution was subsequently tested more than once, and never wavered for a moment; and her experience probably induced her sisters likewise to preserve their maiden liberty.

In the spring of the year 1773, Hannah More, accompanied by two of her sisters, went to London for the first time. She was then twenty-eight years of age, and possessed an independent income, which released her from the onerous toils of a schoolmistress, and sufficed for all her requirements; she retained a happy home with her fondly attached family, possessed many valuable friends, and had already won a high reputation for learning and for brilliant conversational talents. She had not therefore to seek in the metropolis those objects which commonly attract the lowly born, increase of wealth, or elevation of station, either for herself or her kinswomen.

Her future career began to open more clearly before her, and she sought an opportunity of increasing her stores of knowledge, of becoming acquainted with authors and other celebrated persons, of seeing the world, and ascertaining the part which it behoved her to play in it. In fact she went into the great arena of life to try her strength among the athletæ. She had by her, and probably with her, the tragedy of 'Regulus' ready for the stage and the press; and it was a part of her business in this, her first visit to London, to see a publisher, and to make arrangements with him for the immediate publication of her already popular school-play.

The author of the present biographical notice possesses a copy of 'The Search after Happiness; a Pastoral Drama; the ninth edition, with Additions, 1787.' The preface states that "This little poem was composed when the author was only eighteen years old," that is to say, in the

year 1763. The dedication, to Mrs. Gwatkin, acknowledges the friendship with which from Hannah More's childhood that lady had honoured her, and bears the date of the drama's publication, May 10, 1773, the year and period of Hannah's first visit to London. There is a prologue, and between the concluding speech of the drama and the epilogue there is an Ode to Charity, "To be performed by the characters of the piece." This may probably be reckoned among the 'Additions;' the others consist in an 'Inscription in a beautiful Retreat, called Fairy Bower;' a 'Prologue to Hamlet, spoken by the late Mr. Powell, on his benefit night, at the theatre of Jacob's Well, near Bristol;' besides another prologue, which, filling the last leaves of the pamphlet, has been torn away and partly lost. The last page (57) shows it to have been spoken on the first appearance of a female candidate for scenic favour.

'The Search after Happiness' met with immediate and great success; and she presented the copyright and profits of this her first publication, to her beloved and devoted sister Patty.

The theatre, with its scenic hero, formed a principal object of attraction. Having seen Garrick in 'Lear,' and written her opinion of that wonderful impersonation to a mutual acquaintance, who showed it to him, Garrick called on her, at her lodgings in Henrietta-street, Covent-Garden. A lively conversation ensued; he perceived at once her extraordinary mental powers, her tendency and talent for the drama, and he resolved to cultivate her friendship. The next day she received from Mrs. Garrick an invitation to their villa at Hampton. Being introduced there to Mrs. Montagu, and meeting soon afterwards at Mrs. Montagu's house, in Hill-street, Mrs. Boscawen, and

at Mrs. Boscawen's house, in Audley-street, Mrs. Vesey, London society, in all its combined strength of intellectual and aristocratic glory, burst forth at once on her enraptured vision.

In the biography of every literary woman of this period, the name of Mrs. Montagu finds a place; not for the sake of her literary works, not for the superior and incomparable fineness of her sense, not for her admirable accomplishments; but because, being a distinguished leader of the fashionable world, she used her influence to bring out of the dimness of obscurity and the discouragement of solitary effort the most gifted of her fellow-countrywomen; to make them agreeably known to each other, to enhance their brilliancy by gentle collision, to clear their way to success by placing them in contact with people of rank and fortune, while leavening the dull and formal frivolity of patrician assemblages with refined and elevating elements. Oh, for another Mrs. Montagu, in this the seventh lustre of the nineteenth century! Authoresses miss her as much as the chimney-sweepers do. Many there are among the great who patronise and exhibit lions and lionesses in their respective circles; but where can now be found the drawing-room of a leading member of the highest social class in which persons of genius habitually meet to ameliorate each others' minds and manners, and to blend the silver threads of their discourse with the flimsy tissue of conventional utterances? There is nothing more beautiful or beneficial in that human intercourse, which is merely mental and of the earth, than the association of persons of elevated rank with those of gifted beings in a lower station.

Hannah More's quickness of repartee and sharpness of intellect, her ready application of one fact to illustrate

or contradict another, her aptness of quotation, gaiety of heart, sweetness of temper, and unaffected kindliness and sincerity, soon won universal favour. Rank, wealth, and their accessories, never dazzled her for an instant. Genius, learning, and urbanity, allured her; and when they gave not only reciprocal estimation, but admiring homage to her talents, she did feel rejoiced and elated, and occasionally, perhaps, she felt her brain whirl a little, though thought steadied it in a moment.

Practical respect for religious ordinances, a serious assent to the doctrinal truths of Christianity, and the highest moral rectitude, had, from childhood, become inwrought parts of her character; and her ardent enthusiasm had always the counterbalance of sober judgment. Sunday dinner-parties and the opera-house proved, from the first, revolting to her sense of right, and she abjured them speedily, although, in those days of lukewarm religion and lax morality, they were not thought wrong by many of the most exemplary persons in that grave section of fashionable society to which she at once attached herself. She never enjoyed gregarious meetings, and, like Mrs. Montagu, she never played at cards: conversation parties, whether they numbered half-a-dozen or half-a-hundred, she delighted in.

Among the earliest and warmest of her London friends were Sir Joshua Reynolds and his sister, at whose house, or through whose interposition, she made the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson, Edmund Burke, and Bishop Percy. At the request of Miss Reynolds, Hannah More sat to her for a portrait. It represents her small and slender figure gracefully attired; the hands and arms delicately fine; the eyes large, dark, and lustrous; the eye-brows well marked and softly arched; the countenance beaming with benevo-

lent and intelligent expression. The only drawback on her appearance is the peculiar flatness of the bridge of the nose.

On returning to Bristol, Hannah More set herself assiduously to the study of the Latin historians, orators, and poets. In 1774 'The Inflexible Captive' (Regulus) was acted with much applause at the Bath theatre. The prologue was from the pen of her friend Dr. Langhorne, then vicar of Blagdon; the epilogue from that of David Garrick, who was present at the first representation of this tragedy. It was subsequently performed at Exeter, and published in London during Hannah More's second visit. In the same year Mr. Burke's election for Bristol was warmly aided by the interest of Hannah More and her sisters.

In 1775, during her stay in London, she published a volume containing two poetical tales, 'Sir Eldred of the Bower,' and 'The Bleeding Rock;' which were received with a public outburst of eulogy, led by the voices of Mrs. Montagu, Burke, Garrick, and Johnson. The latter is alleged to have admired, revised, and slightly altered the manuscript of 'Sir Eldred.' About this time it appears that she first became domiciled with the Garricks for many months in the year, at their house in the Adelphi and their villa at Hampton; having a separate room assigned for the reception of her private friends and the uninterrupted pursuit of her studies. In a letter written from London in 1775, while the first rich bloom still rested on the fruits of her fashionable experience, Hannah More remarks:—"The more I see of the 'honoured, famed, and great,' the more I see of the littleness, the unsatisfactoriness of all created good; and that no earthly pleasure can fill up the wants of the immortal principle within." A perception of the under current of follies, vices, and

miseries which poisoned the springs of fashionable society, always tempered her enjoyment of the enchanted cup, saddened her participation gradually more and more, and eventually caused her to turn away from it in disgust.

Nevertheless, she zealously pursued, under the most favourable auspices, the ambitious course upon which she had entered, flattered with the hope of fulfilling the expectations of her friends, and gladdening the hearts of her family by achieving a dramatic conquest. She spent the first six months of the year 1766 with the Garricks, at Hampton and in the Adelphi; working at 'Percy,' entering much into society, and witnessing twenty-seven of the series of performances in which David Garrick bade farewell to the stage.

Her volume of 'Essays on Various Subjects, principally designed for Young Ladies,' is not alluded to by Roberts. Thompson mentions it as "the first of her ethical treatises," and says that she was engaged in writing it while still occupied with 'Percy;' but he assigns no date to its publication. The dedication to Mrs. Montagu supplies this information, bearing at its close the words, "Bristol, May 20, 1777." This book passed through four editions in the course of ten years; and although suppressed by the author in the uniform collection of her works, has been reprinted in Whittingham's Cabinet Library, and probably in many other forms by various publishers. The matter which it contains was embodied by Hannah More in subsequent works. The introduction is timidly but ably written. The essays are 'On Dissipation,' 'Conversation,' 'Envy,' 'The Danger of Sentimental or Romantic Connections,' 'True and False Meekness,' 'The Cultivation of the Heart and Temper in the Education of Daughters,' 'The Importance of Religion to the Female Character,' and 'Observations

on Genius, Taste, Good Sense,' &c. They evince the same powers of thought, which, in a more mature state, wrought afterwards so effectually and so beneficially upon society. The style is too antithetical, and so thoroughly Johnsonian, that several sentences plagiarized word for word seem quite at home amidst congenial expressions of her original opinions.

In the summer of the same year (1777), she paid a visit to some of her father's wealthy relations in Norfolk, and retraced with filial satisfaction the scenes of his childhood and youth; and she also spent a few tranquil and pleasant days at Palgrave with Mrs. Barbauld, passing and repassing through London; and going from thence, on her return, to Hampton for a time, before she went home to Bristol in August. In the November of the same year she was again a sojourner in the metropolis; her tragedy of 'Percy' having been accepted, through the intervention of Mr. Garrick, by Mr. Harris, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, where it was brought out in that month. It had been composed under the immediate supervision of Garrick; he wrote the prologue and epilogue with his usual point and sprightliness; he performed the principal character on the first representation; and Mrs. Garrick accompanied Hannah More to the theatre to witness the most acclaiming triumph a modern author can experience. The success of the tragedy was complete; it had a run of twenty-one nights, was frequently re-produced as an established favourite, and went the whole round of the provincial theatres. It was printed with a dedication to Earl Percy; the first edition, comprising four thousand copies, was sold in a fortnight, and she received the congratulations and rapturous eulogies of those "whose praise is fame." The sum of 600*l.*, gained by this successful drama, was invested

for her at 5 per cent. interest, upon good security, by the warm-hearted friend whose zealous exertions had cleared her way to general celebrity.

Going home to her sisters, in April, 1778, with a heart overflowing with joyous gratitude, she wrote her 'Ode from H. M. at Bristol, to Dragon, Mr. Garrick's house-dog, at Hampton;' one of the most cordial and elegant tributes ever rendered by a poetess to her friends; nor does it lack a moral:—

"How wise a short retreat to steal
The vanity of life to feel,
And from its cares to fly;
To act one calm domestic scene,
Earth's bustle and the grave between,
Retire and learn to die!"

This little poem, together with an 'Heroic Epistle to Miss Sally Horne,' full of liveliness, learning, and ingenuity, and playfully inculcating many valuable truths, and a tale called 'The Puppet Show,' were published in 1778.

Garrick's death occurred January the 20th, 1779, and Hannah More, instantly obeying the summons of his widow, went to soothe the first anguish of bereavement, and remained with her at Hampton, in deep seclusion, for many months. In the same year her tragedy called 'The Fatal Falsehood,' which had been read, revised, and approved by Garrick, was successfully performed at Covent Garden Theatre. The epilogue was written by Richard Brinsley Sheridan; the prologue, written by herself, contains some touches of her didactic pen:

"Self-conquest is the lesson books should preach,
Self-conquest is the theme the stage should teach.
Vouchsafe to learn this obvious duty here,
The verse though feeble, yet the moral's clear;
Oh, mark to-night the unexampled woes,
Which from unbounded self-indulgence flows."

The false syntax of the two last lines is obvious; how it

escaped her own perception and correction is a marvel. She could not be persuaded by her friends to attend the first, or any subsequent representation of this tragedy, which met with decided success both in London and the provinces. She dedicated it when published to the Countess Bathurst; who, with the Earl, was among the most zealous and constant of her aristocratic friends; and many a happy evening she had quietly passed by their fireside at Apsley House. 'The Fatal Falsehood,' although much admired on the stage and in print, never attained to the high degree of popularity won by 'Percy.' It was attacked in the 'St. James's Chronicle' by Mrs. Cowley, who accused Hannah More of having plagiarized it from her 'Albina.' Hannah More wrote a temperate reply, denying her knowledge of the very existence of such a tragedy as 'Albina;' and although her indignation was aroused at the charge, and like her own Emmelina, she felt ready to

> "Grow proud,
> As gentle spirits still are apt to do
> When cruel slight or killing scorn assails them,"

she took an early opportunity of conferring a kindness secretly upon the person who had tried to injure her. There certainly exists a degree of likeness between 'The Fatal Falsehood' and 'Albina,' which must be admitted as an excuse for the attack, although it cannot wholly justify it, nor in any degree exempt its style and temper from blame.

In June, 1779, Hannah More returned to Bristol. Revisiting Mrs. Garrick at a later period of the same year, she passed the winter of 1779-80, in comparative retirement at Hampton; and in the spring, removing to the Adelphi for a few weeks, they emerged once more into the occasional sunshine of a more social way of life. Hannah More

made some stay at Oxford, with the Kennicotts, in the summer, on her road back to Bristol; and came again to Mrs. Garrick for the winter of 1780-81. In 1781, at the request of Bishop Lowth, she published the 'Reflections of King Hezekiah in his sickness'—a versified paraphrase of Isaiah xxxviii. In the summer of the same year, Mrs. Garrick accompanied her to Bristol, and spent a month with the unanimous and lively sisterhood, enjoying also the occasional society of their venerable and cheerful parents. In that year Hannah More wrote her 'Tale of Woe,' a record of facts concerning a German lunatic named Louisa, who had been found under a haystack near Bristol. Resorting in December to her accustomed winter quarters, Hannah More prepared to make good literary use of the tranquil seclusion in which she and her friend generally passed the cold weather.

Early in the year 1782, Hannah More published her 'Sacred Dramas,' and in the same volume 'Sensibility, an epistle to the Hon. Mrs. Boscawen.' They were received with acclamation by the arbiters of public taste, and sold with extraordinary rapidity. Leaving Mrs. Garrick in June, Hannah More repaired to Oxford, where she took up her abode for some little time with Dr. and Mrs. Kennicott. Dr. Johnson, being at that time on a visit to the University, accompanied her as a guide, to point out the most interesting objects in Pembroke College, where he had once been a student. From Oxford she proceeded home to Bristol, and from thence returned to Mrs. Garrick in December. In a letter dated "Hampton, January 9, 1783," written by Hannah More to her sister Martha, in reply to one which had announced their father's death, Hannah says: "I am very thankful that he was spared to us so long, that he was removed when life began to be a

burden to himself, that he did not survive his faculties, that he was not confined to the miseries of a sick-bed; but above all, that his life was so exemplary, and his death so easy." Their mother survived her bereavement for some time. The date of her decease is not given in either of the biographies.

In the succeeding spring Hannah More migrated with Mrs. Garrick from Hampton to the Adelphi. One of her letters, written in that year, mentions her having long since withdrawn from attendance at theatres, and refusing to be present even to witness Mrs. Siddons's personation of Elwina. Dividing her time, as usual, between her sisters and Mrs. Garrick, with intervening visits to other friends, she entered upon the year 1784; when, after leaving London, she visited Mrs. Walsingham at Thames Ditton, made a tour in Kent, sojourned at Teston, Hunton, Sandleford, Oxford, and Mongewell, and took Mrs. Kennicott home with her to Bristol. In the course of this year she wrote 'The Bas Bleu, or Conversation, a poem.' It was also in 1784, that she saved Anne Yearsley and her family from starvation, taught her to read and write correctly, commenced in her service a correspondence, of which her personal share amounted ultimately to more than a thousand pages, and raised for the same ungrateful and vicious milkwoman a subscription which finally endowed her with nearly 500*l.*

Passing through her periodical migrations, Hannah More, being at Bristol in the summer of 1785, applied herself diligently to the execution of a plan, on which after mature reflection she had fully determined. She purchased a piece of ground in the parish of Wrington, in Somersetshire, situated about ten miles from the city of Bristol; and about two from the local village, which was only

remarkable as the birthplace of Locke, for its dull obscurity, and for the beauty of the surrounding scenery. On the ground thus acquired she built a cottage, which was called after its site, Cowslip Green. This she took possession of as her future habitation, intending to spend the principal part of her time in retired meditation; and henceforth to free herself from the entanglements of general society, and from the beguiling temptations incident to a sanguine temperament in the sunshine and applause of royal and aristocratic favour. She enjoyed rural scenery, and more especially the cheerful aspects of nature, and doubtless foresaw that a quiet rural retreat must add to the comfort of her sisters in their vacation times.

Garrick first mentioned Hannah More at Buckingham Palace, to King George the Third; and subsequently she often received messages from his Majesty, from the Queen, and other members of the Royal Family, indicating their approval and admiration of her works. Her 'Bas Bleu, or Conversation,' having acquired celebrity in manuscript, an intimation was made to her, probably through her friend Mr. Smelt, of the King's wish to possess a copy. She accordingly prepared one in her own neat and clear autograph. In the advertisement prefixed to this poem in the collected edition of her works, Hannah More, referring to the assemblies at Mrs. Vesey's, Mrs. Montagu's, and a few other houses in London, mentions "the many pleasant and instructive hours she had the honour to pass in this company, in which learning was as little disfigured by pedantry, good taste as little tinctured by affectation, and general conversation as little disgraced by calumny, levity, and the other censurable errors with which it is too commonly tainted, as has perhaps been known in any society."

'Florio' seems to have been written in or about the

year 1785, and circulated extensively in manuscript previous to its publication, which of course took place shortly after the date of the prefixed dedication to her friend, the Hon. Horace Walpole, January 27, 1786. The 'Bas Bleu' occupied the latter part of the same volume; which was received by the world, as her plays and all her preceding poems had been, with a welcome as enthusiastic as if England had been one vast drawing-room, and she the petted heiress, secure of social applause for all her sayings and doings.

The early part of the year 1787, she passed as usual at Hampton and in London with Mrs. Garrick, making short visits to other friends; and at the earnest entreaty of Mrs. Boscawen, Hannah More sat at this period to Opie for a portrait, of which Horace Walpole obtained a duplicate copy. Instead of remaining at Bristol during the latter months of this year, she proceeded with her sister Patty to Cowslip Green, where Mary, Elizabeth, and Sarah More also took up their occasional abode. Her disposition being eager and earnest, her occupation, whatever it might be, wholly absorbed her attention; and she often complained that her garden diverted her thoughts from heaven as entirely as London society used to do. In that little demesne she had an opportunity of elucidating her own axiom, that "There is a truth in taste almost as demonstrable as any mathematical proposition."

Sometimes it happens that success in life, bringing with it the pang of disappointed expectation, and the conviction that the very fulfilment of our wishes leaves the heart's yearning unsatisfied, prompts new and higher strivings after imperishable spiritual blessings. Then the soul awakens to the true purpose of earthly existence,—the heavenly ambition to subserve and to fulfil the will of God,

and to be and to do whatsoever He has placed us in this world of His for the especial purpose of being and doing; and the desire of living to Him predominates over or supersedes all former objects of interest. Thus it proved with Hannah More. She had now seen the world, and the world had smiled upon her; not fitfully and capriciously, as too often is its wont, but uninterruptedly and constantly for many years. Her desires for ease, wealth, influence, superiority, society, approbation, and knowledge, had been gratified.

Many of the best homes in England solicited her participation in their luxurious and leisurely enjoyments. Her competence was growing into opulence, from the immense sale of her publications. Her influence—mental, moral, and religious—reached from the palace of the sovereign, through all intervening gradations, to the hut of the Mendip miner. Her superiority to all the other eminent women of her time, in the compass of attainments, the versatility of talent, and the energetic exercise of power in mental purpose and fulfilment, was acknowledged, tacitly or openly, by a Montagu, a Carter, a Chapone, and a Barbauld. The congenial society in which she delighted, delighted also in her. The approbation of a Lowth and a Porteus, of a Barrington and a Horne, cheered and encouraged her pursuit of "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report;" while it might almost literally be affirmed that everybody spoke well of her. She had won the esteem of the worthiest, the admiration of the ablest, the affection of the most amiable, the applause of the most exalted, and the gratitude of the most afflicted of the world's votaries. She had won knowledge too, various and valuable in its height, and depth, and breadth, in its extent and its minuteness. The desire for

action continually incited her to laborious undertakings. The desire for moral and spiritual improvement pervaded more and more the hallowed temple of her heart, and struggled to burst forth and shine with still increasing brightness for the benefit of her fellow-creatures, and the glory of God. She had won every worldly prize for which she had striven. She had proved that even in success there is "vanity and vexation of spirit." The purpose was fulfilled for which she had entered upon the great arena of London life. She had ascertained her powers of usefulness, and the time had now arrived for their entire consecration. She had sought from childhood "the kingdom of God and His righteousness," and now she resolved fully and firmly to sacrifice every other pursuit that could by possibility interfere with the supremacy of that Divine object. Whether it were to rescue the insane from houseless exposure, to raise the abject to competence, to win back to safety the inveigled school-girl, to deliver the half-penitent harlot from the depths of degradation; in short, to administer aid or consolation in any department of charity's wide range of office, Hannah More was ever alert, assiduous, and persevering. Her pen, her purse, her influence, were ever at the service of the necessitous.

Entering warmly into the benevolent plans of her intimate friend, Mr. Wilberforce, and anxious to become, in some measure, his coadjutor in the great work of Negro Emancipation, she published, in 1788, her poem entitled 'The Black Slave Trade,' which became very popular. In the same year appeared anonymously her 'Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society.' The author was speedily recognised, the book obtained an enormous sale, and soon evinced its power by effecting the alteration of prevailing customs, introducing

a stricter code of right and wrong in things formerly deemed allowable or inconsiderately practised, and winning over many persons of influence to the open advocacy of religious principles.

Illness interrupted the series of her annual visits to Mrs. Garrick, but in the spring of 1789 she sojourned for a little while at Hampton, and also at Fulham Palace, where a new walk, cut through a shrubbery by Bishop Porteus, gave rise to that lively and ingenious specimen of her skill in irony entitled 'Bonner's Ghost.' This little poem, being soon afterwards printed by Horace Walpole, at the Strawberry Hill press, circulated briskly and widely through the great world, without obtaining formal publication, until it was inserted, twelve years subsequently, in the collected edition of her works.

During her long intervals of rural retreat, making equestrian excursions with Patty, her favourite colleague, she thoroughly investigated the state of the neighbourhood, and explored with compassionate interest thirteen contiguous parishes left without a resident clergyman, or any other competent religious instructors: the population including not only the most ignorant, the poorest, and the lowest, but also many of the basest and vilest inhabitants of the kingdom. Conceiving it to be her duty to attempt the remedy of these evils, she resolutely set to work, using all her energy, sparing neither bodily labour nor mental exertion, bringing into play, in the first instance, all her persuasive conversational powers to obtain clerical sanction, and to induce ignorant and brutish employers to permit their labourers' children to be taught: then personally instructing intelligent persons how and what to teach; providing school-houses, club-rooms, books, implements, and materials for industrial occupation, and assist-

ing by perpetual supervision and example the carrying out of her carefully-projected schemes for Sunday and day-schools, evening instruction for adults, clothing associations, and female benefit societies. Ten of the forlorn parishes were ultimately brought under this beneficial system. Friends lent their pecuniary aid to this costly undertaking, but the expenses were chiefly defrayed by Hannah More and her munificent sisters, and Patty audited the accounts, and took the responsibility of general almoner. The habits of the whole family, and of Hannah especially, were in all things rigorously neat, methodical, and orderly. Every one of the sisters was a woman of business.

With the close of the year 1789, the four Miss Mores gave up their school. They had kept it up for thirty-two years, sustaining its reputation throughout that long period as the best conducted establishment for the education of young ladies in the United Kingdom. The sisters had been prosperous from the first in the moral and mental training of their pupils, and in making money and friends. They had built for themselves a handsome house in Great Pulteney Street, Bath, overlooking the Sydney Gardens, intending to divide their time between that residence and Hannah's cottage at Cowslip Green; and they took possession of their new abode and commenced their life of comparative leisure in the month of January, 1790. A school of sixty girls out of wealthy families, renewed from time to time through so many years, often including the children of former pupils, and involving the personal gratitude and esteem of these relays, and of the respective kindred and connections of each, must of necessity, in itself alone, have attached to the Miss Mores a multitude of friends; besides the peers and prelates, blue-stockings,

and members of the worlds of literature and fashion, who were attached by the magic charm of Hannah's fascinating talents, and who, resisting her strenuous efforts to dissolve the spells which she had cast, persevered in following her not only to Bath, but into the then isolated seclusion to which she had withdrawn.

One motive, though not a leading one, for relinquishing her attendance in London during its seasons, might probably be the embarrassment which she anticipated from meeting face to face the personages whose practices her works were intended to reprove: but the conviction being forced upon her, that they liked her not a whit the less, while they respected her the more for her admonitions, she yielded to the indications of increased facilities of usefulness, conscientiously making her cheerful companionship and her friendly letters, in one way or other, incentives to excellence. When people came after her for instruction she could not shut them out.

It is said that Queen Charlotte was the first to detect the hand of Hannah More, in the 'Thoughts on the Manners of the Great.' A sequel to that celebrated work appeared in 1790, under the title of 'An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World, by One of the Laity,' which was immediately known to be hers, and received with great applause.

In 1792, at the urgent suggestion of Bishop Porteus that she would write some tracts for circulation among mechanics and other workmen, in order to counteract the pernicious effects of papers indefatigably circulated by seditious infidels, she produced the Dialogue of 'Village Politics, by Will Chip,' which was hailed by competent judges as a master-piece in its kind. It fulfilled its purpose in a marvellous manner. Private individuals had it

reprinted and dispersed by thousands, and the Government, having proved its worth, sent tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands, through England, Scotland, Ireland, and the colonies.

In 1793 she published, as an antidote to Atheistic blasphemy, and for the pecuniary relief of the French emigrant clergy, her 'Remarks on the Speech of M. Dupont,' which brought in more than 240*l*. Her personal compassion and that of her sisters, staunch Protestants as they were, had been stimulated by seeing many of those exiled priests at Bath, where frequent welcomes awaited them at the hospitable table of the Mores.

It was about this period that the personal friendship of the Mores with Mr. Turner of Belmont, chanced to be renewed. Riding past Cowslip Green, not knowing to whom it belonged, and struck with the prettiness of the cottage and grounds, he alighted to inspect them more closely. Mary More happened to be amusing herself in the garden; she recognized Mr. Turner, and invited him into the parlour, where Hannah sat writing. Agreeable conversation ensued, and friendly intercourse was re-established for the remainder of their lives. He became a not unfrequent guest at Cowslip Green, entered with interest into their beneficent local plans, and took part in the annual school and club festivals upon the Mendip Hills. It may here be mentioned that Hannah More sent him a copy of each of her works as soon as published; that he daily gave precedency at his own table to the toast of "Hannah More," always spoke of her with affectionate reverence as the most excellent and gifted of women, and bequeathed to her at his death a legacy of a thousand pounds.

Continuing to work out the scheme of instructing the labouring classes by means of entertaining tracts and broad sheets, she had prepared sufficient materials to commence the Cheap Repository issue in 1795. The 'Family Magazine' of Mrs. Trimmer furnished the model of these compositions; and during three successive years Hannah More edited every month a tale, a ballad, and a religious exhortation. She wrote the greater number of them herself, Patty wrote a few, Sarah wrote 'Sorrowful Sam,' Mr. Mason and some other authors, contributed the rest. The immediate circulation has been estimated at a million of copies for each tract. The obvious and instant good they did was incalculable. Her 'Riot' was known to have been the means of suppressing dangerous tumults at Bath and at Hull; and besides many well authenticated instances of local usefulness, the effect of the Cheap Repository may be traced in the alteration which took place in the temper of the times. The tracts were translated into most of the modern languages of Europe, and had an extensive circulation in America. Nor has their spirit evaporated. Thousands still continue to be dispersed among the poor in the English and Welsh languages, and add to the happiness of many a cottage home.

In 1799 Hannah More published her 'Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education, with a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune.' This work had occupied her attention for several previous years. How highly the British public appreciated her labours was proved by the sale of seven large editions of these 'Strictures' in the course of twelve months, while royal and noble friends stood foremost in grateful congratulation of her successful and eminent public services.

At the suggestion of Mr. Cadell, her next literary task was the revision of her works for a uniform edition in eight volumes, which appeared in 1801.

It is not necessary in this brief sketch to enter into the particulars of the commotion raised in 1799 by mistaken and malevolent persons against her schools, nor to do more than allude to the simultaneous calumnies of literary rivals, full of envy at her success and hatred of her moral and mental excellence, and determined at all hazards to traduce and vilify her spotless character. Hitherto, she had been speeded through life's voyage on a sunshiny track by favouring wind and tide; now, opposing storms, a gulf stream, and darkness, all set in against her. She had earned a good name, she had dearly cherished the approval of her fellow-creatures, and now she was to learn experimentally the fickleness of human favour. Having devoted herself to self-improvement by diligently studying the principles of right conduct, she was ready to test their practical force when trouble came; Providence dealing with such characters as hers as the potter does with his choicest wares, first delicately drawing and colouring the pattern, and then placing them in a furnace to burn it in.

For more than three years was she, to use her own heart-worn words, "battered, hacked, scalped, tomahawked;" and under these aggrieved and depressed feelings her health gave way, and she terminated her habitude, of nearly thirty years' duration, of spending the spring-time at Hampton. The Rev. Henry Thompson, in his 'Life of Hannah More,' cites a paragraph from a letter of this period, written to Dr. Whalley by Mrs. Piozzi, in which she observes:—

"'I hate when vice can bolt her arguments,
And virtue has no tongue to check her pride,'

says Milton; and they want now to stop the warning voice which yet would save us if men would permit. So valuable a writer, and writings so well-timed as hers, will not be found again; and if their vile detractions should injure her feeble health, the mischief done would be past my computation."

Hundreds of sympathising voices comforted her under this trial, and among them were those of the holiest and most diligent prelates of the Church.

Meanwhile, not lying supine to exaggerate by reflection the force of each malicious stroke, she exerted herself as much as her feeble health would allow, not only in carrying on her local charities, personally or through the agency of her sisters, but also in laying out some acres of land, which she had purchased, within half a mile of the village of Wrington and in the same parish; and in planning and erecting there a house, larger, more substantial, and more commodious than her summer dwelling-place at Cowslip Green, and suited to be a comfortable home all the year round. With this new residence her sisters were so much pleased that they disposed of their house at Bath, and fixed themselves wholly with Hannah at Barley Wood in the year 1802. During that summer Hannah recovered herself sufficiently to spend some weeks at Fulham with Bishop and Mrs. Porteus, accompanied by her faithful Martha. Shame and disgrace, though cast upon her most unjustly and by the unworthy, had proved to her the bitterest of trials. The clouds of obloquy were now breaking up and dissipating, and the clear brightness which succeeded cheered her spirit for fresh labours.

Her intimacy with the Countess of Elgin, governess to the Princess Charlotte of Wales, and her personal knowledge of the sweet and intelligent child, then presumptive

heiress of the British Crown, incited her ever active loyalty to the production, in 1805, of her 'Hints for the Education of a Young Princess,' for which she received the thanks of the episcopal preceptor and, through him, those of the Queen and royal family. Perhaps, however, the most gratifying encomium which she obtained on this occasion was implied by the words of the aged Elizabeth Carter, who, laying her hand upon the arm of Hannah More, emphatically said, "I am glad I have lived to read it."

In December, 1808, 'Cœlebs in Search of a Wife' appeared anonymously. The authorship was immediately recognised, the work excited an immense sensation, the first edition was sold in a fortnight, and eleven editions more were demanded within twelve months.

Early in the year 1811, she published her 'Practical Piety, or the Influence of the Religion of the Heart on the Conduct of the Life.' Its sale and its celebrity exceeded even those of 'Cœlebs.' In the following summer she refreshed her health and spirits by a visit to the Rev. Thomas Gisborne, at Yoxall Lodge, in Staffordshire, by exploring that picturesque neighbourhood, and by joining him and a party of choice friends in a tour through some other parts of England and an excursion into Wales. While sojourning in the lovely vale of Llangollen, she honoured its Plâs Newydd with a pilgrimage, and made the acquaintance of Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby.

Hannah More took a warm interest in the Welsh people, and, entering into the plans of Bishop Burgess for improving the education and condition of the native clergy of the Principality, liberally subscribed towards those objects during a period of twenty years.

In the spring of 1812, she received at Barley Wood a letter from Mr. Gisborne, dated "Barmouth, May 29, 1812,"

in which, relating his journey from Welshpool to Dolgelly, and thence to his place of sojourn, he describes in a few well-selected words the physical geography of that peculiar tract of country with unsurpassable accuracy and elegance.* In the same year she published her 'Christian Morals,' which met with a good reception, but fell short of the extreme popularity won by her two last productions. All her books had, in fact, been bought up with avidity, and edition after edition continued to be called for with insatiable eagerness, until another new work superseded in some degree its predecessor.

The happy household group of five, which had remained unbroken for fifty-six years since the first voluntary domestication, and inhabited for fifty years four houses of their own building without the occurrence of a death in either, forming a little polity so well compacted by mutual suitability and usefulness, that the loss of either of its members must leave a crippled frame, approached at length its inevitable dissolution. After an illness of only five days, the calm and steadfast spirit of Mary More departed in blissful hope on Easter Sunday, the 18th of April, 1813. This grievous shock was deeply felt by the survivors, although they bore it with exemplary fortitude. Hannah's health betrayed her mental sufferings, and she went, accompanied by Martha, to Lady Olivia Sparrow, at Brampton Park, near Huntingdon, and afterwards made a tour of visits to her friends in Kent and Surrey, in order to revive her shattered strength.

In 1815 she manifested her renewed energy by the publication of her 'Essay on the Character and Practical Writings of St. Paul,' a work which more than sustained her previous reputation.

* Roberts, vol. iii., pp. 371-5.

About this time, her clothes having accidentally taken fire, she must have perished in the flames but for her own presence of mind and the heroic courage of her friend Miss Roberts. Martha More, alluding to this disaster in a letter to Dr. Whalley,* says:—"My sister's composure during the whole exceeds credibility; not a scream or the least agitation of feature. Upon my mentioning this to her afterwards, she replied, she thought all was over—making a bustle would answer no end; and she was striving to turn her thoughts another way."

Her humble estimate of herself, and her ceaseless and ever-renewing efforts to live up to that high standard of excellence which she had raised as an incentive to diligence in others, may be inferred from records of her conversation, extracts from her journal, and letters to her intimate friends.

In a letter to Mr. Knox, written in June, 1816, Hannah More, alluding to the declining health of her sisters Sarah and Martha, and to the mortal illness of her sister Elizabeth, adds:—"I am so much your disciple—that is, so much of an optimist, as to see a graciously providential hand in all these dealings. I feel, even at my age, that I stand in need of reiterated correction. My temper is naturally gay. This gaiety even time and sickness have not much impaired. I have carried too much sail. My life, upon the whole, must be reckoned an uncommonly prosperous and happy one. I have been blessed with more friends of a superior caste than have often fallen to the lot of so humble an individual. Nothing but the grace of God, and frequent attacks through life of very severe sickness, could have kept me in tolerable order. If I am no better with all these visitations, what should I have

* Thompson's 'Memoir,' pp. 267-8.

been without them? No, my dear sir, I have never yet felt a blow of which I did not perceive the indispensable necessity, in which, on reflection, I did not see and feel the compassionate hand of Divine Mercy, the chastisement of a tender Father."* On the 16th day of the same month the amiable Elizabeth More sank to rest, and the schools lost in her their inspector of needlework, and Barley Wood the most motherly of its mistresses.

The public disturbances among the labouring classes in the winter of 1816-17 summoned Hannah More again to her writing-desk, and she produced 'The Death of Mr. Fantom,' 'The Delegate,' 'The Valley of Tears,' and some other tracts, as additions to her Cheap Repository store.

On the 17th of May, 1817, after long protracted sufferings borne with a martyr's constancy, died Sarah More; the sisters having thus far passed away in the order of birth.

In 1818, Hannah edited another uniform edition of her own works, and, at the request of Sir Alexander Johnston, wrote 'The Feast of Freedom,' a dramatic piece for translation into the Cingalese language, to be performed by a native choir at anniversary celebrations of the 12th of August, 1816, from which date all the children of slaves in the island of Ceylon were emancipated.

Hannah and Martha, still spared to each other, continued, united in heart and in pursuit, to enjoy the blessings of life and to diffuse happiness around them. In the summer of 1819, Hannah More published her 'Moral Sketches of Prevailing Opinions and Manners, Foreign and Domestic,' with 'Reflections on Prayer' appended. The first edition was sold in one day, and "realised" 3000*l.*

On the 14th† of September, 1819, four days of agonising

* Roberts's 'Memoir,' vol. iii., p. 462.

† In the text of Mr. Thompson's 'Memoir' this date is given: see

pain, arising from internal inflammation, terminated the mortal existence of Martha More. In death, as in life, cheerful acquiescence in the will of God, care for the poor, and intense affection for her sister Hannah prevailed. Martha More left behind her a large collection of materials, carefully put by from time to time, which she intended to be wrought up into a memoir of the sister whom from infancy she had admired and delighted in beyond all other human objects of attachment. Unfortunately, the biographer selected by Martha preceded Hannah to the tomb, and those rich and valuable stores fell consequently into the hands of a well-meaning but incompetent gentleman.

The death of Martha More was the most dreadful loss that Hannah ever sustained. She felt it with all the keenness of her sensitive nature; while, strong in faith, she bore it with unshaken fortitude, accepted every solace offered by condoling friends, and rose elastic from her sorrow to pursue her career of usefulness by working at the tracts for the people, which she retouched, adapted to the requirements of the time, and published in one volume.

In 1820, while suffering from severe illness, she prepared a new edition of her 'Moral Sketches' for the press, and prefixed to it an obituary notice of King George III. Successful authorship had become a vapid thing since Patty, who rejoiced in it, was gone; and the only satisfaction Hannah could now derive from it flowed from the consciousness of devoting an intrusted talent to its proper use.

She had always been accustomed to practise needlework,

p. 288. In the copy of the monumental inscription, at p. 328, the 16th of September occurs. The latter is probably erroneous; the age annexed certainly is so. Mr. Roberts merely says that she died "in September."

and she excelled in the ornamental kinds. Ever intent on multiplying opportunities of being useful, even in trivial ways, she made a habit, when old age came on, of supplying the stalls of her friends at charitable bazaars with knitted socks and shoes for babies, and other fancy manufactures, and often accompanied them with verses composed for the occasion, to give an impulse to the sale. In 1821 she wrote, for the use of a child of one of her servants, some nursery verses, which she was prevailed upon to publish in an enlarged form, under the title of 'Bible Rhymes on the Names of all the Books of the Old and New Testaments, with Allusion to some of the Principal Incidents and Characters.'

In 1822 she suffered another access of severe illness; and, after a partial recovery, lasting for some months, was seized in 1824 with yet another, of a kind which baffled the skill of her anxious medical advisers, and induced them to pronounce her case utterly hopeless. At this time she directed the extraction of various passages to be made from her works and arranged in a certain order, dictated a preface, and sent the little volume to the press, under the title of 'The Spirit of Prayer.' The whole of the first edition was bespoken before it appeared. She regarded herself as a dying woman, and wrote from what was "virtually," as Mr. Thompson has observed, though not "actually," her deathbed. She rallied, however, and again attained sufficient strength to see her friends, to enjoy their companionship, and to interest herself in the affairs of the busy world.

Hannah More, being thus left alone in authority over her household, prevented by ill health from leaving the two up-stairs rooms in which she lived and saw visitors, continued, as regularly as she could, to instruct her

servants in their religious duties, and to offer up family prayer with them personally or by deputy. Relying on her knowledge of their obedient conduct in former years, on the efficacy of the solemn exhortation addressed to them by her sister Martha when dying, and on the result of her own ceaseless endeavours to teach them to be good, and to attach them by kindness to herself, she entertained neither distrust nor suspicion, and indulgently regarded the increase in each year's expenditure as caused by defective judgment rather than by want of faithfulness. At length, however, the sad truth, long evident to lookers-on, burst suddenly upon the knowledge of Hannah More, that her eight trusted servants were dishonest, intemperate, and corrupt; that they habitually conspired in the embezzlement and unlawful consumption of her property, and led lives which made her house a scandal, instead of a model, to the neighbourhood. Under the anguish of this discovery, convinced how much age, sickness, and previous habits, subjected her to domestic imposition, and, in spite of her large fortune, rendered her dependent on the attention of watchful friends, she yielded reluctantly to the proposal of those who wished her to remove to Clifton, in order that they might, without neglecting other duties, devote themselves more effectually to her comfort. It is probable the consideration that she could there live at less expense than was necessary at Barley Wood, and would thus be enabled to enlarge her charitable outlay, had also an influence on this decision. The notion that a permanent diminution of property obliged her to change her residence is stated on good authority to have been utterly erroneous. Looking her last at the spot she loved best on earth, Hannah More gently exclaimed, "I am driven like Eve out of Paradise, but not by angels!" It wrung her

heart to go, but she resigned herself to the trial, and went through it without flinching. On the 18th of April, 1828, she removed to No. 4, Windsor Terrace, Clifton, and there for four years enjoyed the society of the numerous friends from all parts of the kingdom who sought the advantage of her conversation. She still carried on, both in autograph and by dictation, an extensive correspondence, superintended her female clubs and three remaining schools, and diligently persevered in doing good in every way and by every means which her ingenious and active mind could devise.

Notwithstanding her feeble constitution and frequent illnesses, she is described by her friends as having always looked young of her age, and as remaining to the last free from the bodily infirmities usually attendant upon advanced life.

Besides the portraits already mentioned in this epitome of her life, three others were taken: one at Barley Wood, by an artist vaguely designated as "Mr. Bean's son-in-law, S——," and two still later by Pickersgill, one of them being done for Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, and the other for R. L. Gwatkin, Esq.

In September, 1832, she had a serious illness, and from that period her memory failed, and her fine faculties gradually became impaired, until she sunk into an almost unconscious state, never, however, forgetting to be kind, holy, and devout. "On the 7th of September, 1833," says Mr. Thompson, the best of her biographers, "the pious and benevolent spirit of Hannah More gently, and almost imperceptibly, passed the barrier of time."

She bequeathed ten thousand pounds to various charitable and religious societies, and the residue of her large fortune to the augmentation of the endowment of the

district church of St. Philip and St. Jacob, in the city of Bristol.

Having been born on the 2nd of February, 1745, she had at her decease attained the age of eighty-eight years, seven months, and five days.

The shops in the city of Bristol were shut and the church-bells rung muffled peals as the funeral procession passed through, bearing the corpse of that sickly younger child of a charity-schoolmaster, who had become one of the most illustrious women that ever lived, and "one of the most indefatigable labourers in the husbandry of God,"* to her grave in Wrington churchyard, honoured and mourned by the princes and people of many lands.

The mortal remains of the five sisters rest together under a large stone slab, enclosed by an iron railing and overshadowed by a yew-tree. A mural tablet in the parish-church records their memory. Of Hannah most truly might it be said—

> "Marble need not mark thine ashes,
> Sculpture need not tell of thee,
> For thine image in thy writings,
> And on many a soul shall be."†

She was conversant with the social life of England, from the court of the Sovereign, through each particular class colouring the widening concentric circles, even to the darkened outskirts and waste places, the scattered haunts of pariahs and castaways in depravity. Born in a low grade of the middle class, and occupying through life a higher grade of the same class, she opened for herself the way to a station of honour in the most elevated social circles of her country, became a companion of the noblest

* Alexander Knox thus described her.

† Philips's Translation of Williams of Pantycelyn's 'Monody on the Death of the Rev. Gryffith Jones of Llanddowror.'

by birth, the most conspicuous by rank and position, and the most eminent for genius, acquirements, public services, and moral excellence.

Besides the friends incidentally mentioned in the foregoing pages, she held intercourse at different periods of her career with many other eminent men, among whom were Bishops Newton and Watson, Gibbon the historian, Soame Jenyns, Boswell, De Lolme, Mackenzie, the Wartons, Harris the author of 'Hermes,' Jonas Hanway, John Newton, the Burneys, Sir William Jones, Bryant, General Paoli, Hurdis, Paley, Dean Milner, the Neckars, John Bowdler, Dr. Buchanan, Pepys, Stephen, Vansittart, Henry Thornton, Dr. Chalmers, Archbishop Magee, and the Macaulays. As years passed on, her reading having kept pace with the increased fecundity of the printing-press, she was found ever alive to the interests of the present day and of the transient hour, a lively politician, and a zealous philanthropist.

Perhaps there never lived another Englishwoman whose conversation was at once so generally pleasing and so extensively useful. It was not merely in the superficial intercourse of morning visits, dinner parties, and evening assemblies that her companionship won estimation; she was welcomed to the hearths and homes of the most excellent and eminent persons in their hours of especial joy and sorrow, to share the calm pleasures of domestic retirement, as an attendant on their dying beds, and a sympathizing comforter of desolate mourners. At home she was felt to be the most amiable of women; abroad, the most winning of female instructors.

That from the instrumentality of Robert Raikes and Hannah More proceeded, in a great measure, the restoration of vital energy to our Church of England congrega-

tions is undeniable; and Jane Porter* did but concur in the general verdict of three successive generations who hailed Hannah More as their living instructor, and pronounced her to have been a principal agent in rectifying the morals and manners of the country.

It has been erroneously averred that her ethical writings are mere digests of those of deeper theologians. No one conversant with the lucubrations of theologians and with her productions could for an instant maintain such an opinion. The total absence of metaphysical disquisition, and of abstruse speculation of every kind, the blending and fusing of all doctrines with their actuating tendencies and practical effects, universally characterize her religious essays, which always bear the unmistakable impression of thoughts evolved and worded by her own mind, and often reveal the personal experience which warmed and deepened their indentation. Dramatic talent enlivens all her works, which are never dull and seldom tedious.

She ceaselessly inculcated upon herself and others that our business is not to try to hide what is amiss in us, but to set the conscience by the rule of absolute right, and to endeavour with simple, earnest, and still renewing intensity of purpose, to correct every casual deviation, and to keep strictly to that rule, watching vigilantly against all unfairness, dishonesty, and falseness of heart. Thus, recognizing the real truth without palliation or disguise, she insisted that just as a surgeon would examine a wound preparatory to its cure, just as a builder would survey a dilapidated dwelling-house with the intention of repairing it, so all the evils of our hearts and lives must be ascertained, and we must severally be content to see ourselves in our worst aspects before we can safely set about a sincere and thorough

* Roberts's 'Memoir,' vol. iii., p. 443.

reformation. These are not her own words, nor are they a paraphrase upon them, but merely an inference drawn from the tenor of her works.

Those works have been translated into all the principal modern languages of Europe, and into many Asiatic languages; they have been read by a large proportion of the earth's inhabitants, in the north, south, east, and west, and everywhere they have borne messages of holiness and peace, and led men to the study of the Bible.

Certainly no one ever convicted her contemporaries and companions of folly or of guilt with so little offence or such obvious and great success. Her reproofs are void of harshness; her exhortations replete with persuasive influence. Her adaptive skill was extraordinary; all her didactic pieces fitted exactly into the places which needed them. Her writings possess invincible force in their earnest sincerity; an irresistible charm in their never-failing kindness. Witty and epigrammatic, her sparkling diction advantageously sets forth her argumentative good sense. Whatever she said or wrote flew straight to the mark and hit the bull's-eye of the subject. They manifest admirable judgment in the selection and development of thoughts; absolute originality appears only in the judicial acts of her keenly-observant and discriminating intellect, and in the felicitous application of illustrative similies.

Probably no woman ever read more books, or to better purpose, had more various and extensive opportunities of exercising the faculty of observation, or so sagaciously improved it. No female writer possesses more copious stores of English words and phrases, erudite, rhetorical, conversational, and colloquial. Her command of language is commensurate with the supplies furnished by the national literature from the days of Sir Thomas More to her own.

It is often said (1860) that the writings of Hannah More are slight things, that they have had their day and need not now be read. This is a mistaken notion. Let any well-educated woman, or any sensible man, candidly go through her 'Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great,' her 'Strictures on Female Education,' or either of her treatises, and the conviction must ensue that there is therein a strong vitality which never can become either despicable or useless, and that her works ought still to be read much more generally than they are. They contain plain truths, clearly and pleasantly stated, shaped indeed to meet the moral exigencies of the upper circles of social life in the eighteenth century, and, in so far as mutable customs, habits, and manners, are made the subject of remark, have become in some few particulars obsolete: but human nature, with its manifestations of ignorance and vanity, its depraved bias and proneness to direct its affections, desires, and purposes, to anything rather than to God, remains the same from generation to generation, and the practical wisdom which turned the tide of error and raised the tone of contemporary character is still efficacious, in its bright serenity, to light the course of many voyagers over the glittering and delusive waves of the passing world. Her 'Essay on the Character of St. Paul' is more cosmopolitan in its nature, and more generally applicable to people of all ranks in all generations, than the rest.

Some of her 'Repository Tracts,' addressed to the lower orders of people, contain not only the element of perennial usefulness, but a sublimity of moral and devotional feeling which the plain and almost rude simplicity of the verbal vehicle enhances and endears. Take, for instance, the 'Shepherd of Salisbury Plain.'

Her style has been censured for the frequent repetition of the same thought in different forms: this, although sometimes blamable, will often be found necessary in addressing indolent and superficial readers, as orators experience a similar mode of composition to be for their audience. Iteration, not tautology, is the proper term for such a method of impressing truths by renewed strokes. 'Cœlebs' treating, as old Chaucer sings,—

> "Of storial thing that toucheth gentiless,
> And eke morality and holiness,"

shows more than any other of her separate works Hannah More's compass of mind and the versatility of her faculties. There is the dramatic energy which excited the admiration of Garrick, the delicate irony which charmed Horace Walpole, the satiric point which delighted Dr. Johnson, the fineness of allusion which thrilled Mrs. Montagu, combined with the penetrating insight which astonished alike the simple and sagacious, the good sense which peasants could appreciate, and the benevolence which made her universally beloved. If her other works are considered as pictures, this may be called a stereoscope of society.

Her poetry is neither "simple, sensuous, nor passionate," seldom pathetic, and never sublime. The diction is usually correct and concise, the versification sufficiently harmonious to prevent the subject from being injured by the medium. In her blank verse the metrical and grammatical combinations regularly coincide, forming usually a stately rhythm. Her tragedies, sacred dramas, and all her poems are formed on those principles of composition which the English writers of Queen Anne's days adopted from the French imitators of the Greek and Roman authors, principles which continued to influence the style of all the

chief poets of Hannah More's early and middle life. Her poetry, like theirs, is essentially artificial. It partakes sometimes of the character of Dr. Johnson's compositions in verse, sometimes of those of Mason, and not unfrequently it follows other contemporary models, bearing also invariably the tone of good society, excepting in her 'Ballads for the People,' which resemble other rustic verses of the period.

In poetry, as well as in prose, her chief business lay with human nature, its feelings and thoughts, its desires and actions. With Pope she agreed that—

> "The proper study of mankind is man;"

and the weal and woe of individuals, as mortal sojourners and immortal beings, became the subject of her daily labour and her nightly vigilance. 'The Search after Happiness' has great and durable value from its keen analysis of human motives.

'Sir Eldred of the Bower' is shaped in the fashion of her early days, after the ballad-model given by Bishop Percy in his 'Reliques,' then high in public favour. It has very little merit, either intrinsic or extrinsic. The moral teaches that—

> "The deadliest wounds with which we bleed
> Our crimes inflict alone,
> Man's mercies from God's hand proceed,
> His miseries from his own."

Lines, by the bye, which re-echo the sound of part of a stanza in Gray's 'Ode on a distant prospect of Eton College,'—

> "To each his sufferings: all are men
> Condemned alike to groan,
> The tender for another's woes,
> The unfeeling for his own."

'The Bleeding Rock' resembles very closely the translations made by English poets of the early Georgian

period, from some of Ovid's Metamorphoses. The appended moral is—

> "That half the mischiefs youth and beauty know,
> From vanity's exhaustless fountain flow."

Her Epitaphs are appropriate, terse, and pointed: every one of them conveys admonitory truth.

Her Hymns are trite and insipid. Her 'Sacred Dramas,' notwithstanding the disadvantages attendant on their very nature, cannot be attentively read without entertainment and respect for the writer's ability.

Hannah More herself considered the plot of her 'Inflexible Captive' as deficient in those stirring incidents which prove effective on the stage. The blank verse is well measured, the sentiments are elevated and appropriate, the characters distinctly drawn, and the whole drama indicates real though immature talent for tragedy.

'Percy' is avowedly founded upon M. de Belloy's French drama of 'Gabrielle de Vergy,' taken by him from the horrible old story of Raoul de Coucy and Madame de Faiel. All the revolting circumstances are omitted by Hannah More, and the resemblance remains so slight in the details that it seems almost punctilious to acknowledge the derivation of its plan. She has drawn the characters with an able hand, given true life and spirit to the dialogue, and portrayed the emotions of disappointed affection in three different personages, with great discriminative power, showing the jealous rage of Douglas, the despairing constancy of Percy, and the conscientious submission under heart-rending circumstances of Edwina, in a manner unparalleled by any of her female predecessors or early contemporaries. The blank verse is good, and rises occasionally to pathetic eloquence. 'Percy,' on the whole, must be allowed to possess so few faults and so

many dramatic merits as justly to entitle Hannah More to a durable niche among the tragic poets of England. 'The Fatal Falsehood' is in all respects inferior to 'Percy,' and there is an improbable renewal of the complications of the plot by absurd means, which spoils the bold and clever first conception.

Her 'Slave Trade' is a good didactic poem, containing many effective passages; for instance:—

"Strange power of song! the strain that warms the heart
Seems the same inspiration to impart;
Touched by the extrinsic energy alone,
We think the flame which melts us is our own;
Deceived, for genius we mistake delight,
Charmed as we read, we fancy we can write."

'Florio' is a clever piece of satire, indicating that keenness of observation, and that capability of estimating morals and manners, and prescribing for the cure of their disorders, which, in after years, rendered Hannah More the most distinguished and the most useful Christian monitor of her time. Whatever subject she touches, whether in prose or verse, she enriches with an accumulation of information, illustrates with similies, and sets forth with artistic skill in the most striking and pleasing light. 'The Bas Bleu' is a vivid panorama of polished society, drawn from the life. The descriptions of conversation which it contains are among the best in English poetry:—

"Yet not from low desire to shine
Does genius toil in learning's mine;
Not to indulge in idle vision,
But strike new light by strong collision.
Of Conversation, wisdom's friend,
This is the object and the end,
Of moral truth, man's proper science,
With sense and learning in alliance,
To search the depths, and thence produce
What tends to practice and to use.
And next in value we shall find
What mends the taste, and forms the mind.

If high those truths in estimation,
Whose search is crown'd with demonstration;
To these assign no scanty praise,
Our taste which clear, our views which raise.
For grant that mathematic truth
Best balances the mind of youth;
Yet scarce the truth of taste is found
To grow from principles less sound.
O'er books, the mind inactive lies,
Books, the mind's food, not exercise;
Her vigorous wing she scarcely feels,
Till use the latent strength reveals;
Her slumbering energies call'd forth,
She rises, conscious of her worth;
And, at her new found powers elated,
Thinks them not rous'd, but new created.
Enlightened spirits! you, who know
What charms from polish'd converse flow,
Speak, for you can, the pure delight
When kindling sympathies unite;
When corresponding tastes impart
Communion sweet from heart to heart.
You ne'er the cold gradations need
Which vulgar souls to union lead;
No dry discussion to unfold
The meaning caught ere well 't is told:
In taste, in learning, wit, or science,
Still kindred souls demand alliance:
Each in the other joys to find
The image answering to his mind;
But sparks electric only strike
On souls electrical alike;
The flash of intellect expires,
Unless it meet congenial fires:
The language to th' elect alone
Is, like the mason's mystery known;
In vain the unerring sign is made
To him who is not of the *trade*.
What lively pleasure to divine,
The thought implied, the hinted line,
To feel allusion's artful force,
And trace the image to its source!
Quick memory blends her scattered rays
Till fancy kindles at the blaze;
The works of ages start to view,
And ancient wit elicits new.

* * * * *

But let the letter'd and the fair,
And chiefly let the wit beware;

You, whose warm spirits never fail,
Forgive the hint which ends my tale,
Oh shun the perils which attend
On wit, on warmth, and heed your friend;
Though science nurs'd you in her bowers,
Though fancy crown your brow with flowers,
Each thought, though bright invention fill,
Though Attic bees each word distil;
Yet, if one gracious power refuse
Her gentle influence to infuse;
If she withhold her magic spell,
Nor in the social circle dwell;
In vain shall listening crowds approve,
They'll praise you, but they will not love.
What is this power, you 're loth to mention,
This charm, this witchcraft? 't is attention:
Mute angel, yes; thy looks dispense
The silence of intelligence;
Thy graceful form I well discern,
In act to listen and to learn;
'T is thou for talents shalt obtain
That pardon wit would hope in vain;
Thy wondrous power, thy secret charm,
Shall envy of her sting disarm;
Thy silent flattery soothes our spirit,
And we forgive eclipsing merit;
Our jealous souls no longer burn,
Nor hate thee, though thou shine in turn;
The sweet atonement screens the fault,
And love and praise are cheaply bought.
With some complacency to hear
Though somewhat long the tale appear,
The dull relation to attend,
Which mars the story you could mend;
'T is more than wit, 't is moral beauty,
'T is pleasure rising out of duty.
Nor vainly think, the time you waste,
When temper triumphs over taste."

Her 'Sensibility' must, on the whole, be acknowledged as the sweetest and most pleasing of all Hannah More's poems:—

"Sweet Sensibility! thou secret power
Who shed'st thy gifts upon the natal hour,
Like fairy favours; art can never seize,
Nor affectation catch thy power to please:
Thy subtle essence still eludes the chains
Of definition, and defeats her pains.

Sweet Sensibility! thou keen delight!
Unprompted moral! sudden sense of right!
Perception exquisite! fair virtue's seed!
Thou quick precursor of the lib'ral deed!
Thou hasty conscience! reason's blushing morn!
Instinctive kindness ere reflection's born!
Prompt sense of equity! to thee belongs
The swift redress of unexamin'd wrongs!
Eager to serve, the cause perhaps untried,
But always apt to choose the suff'ring side!
To those who know thee not, no words can paint,
And those who know thee, know all words are faint!

* * * *

Since trifles make the sum of human things,
And half our misery from our foible springs;
Since life's best joys consist in peace and ease,
And though but few can serve, yet all may please;
Oh let th' ungentle spirit learn from hence,
A small unkindness is a great offence.
To spread large bounties, though we wish in vain,
Yet all may shun the guilt of giving pain:
To bless mankind with tides of flowing wealth,
With rank to grace them, or to crown with health,
Our little lot denies; yet lib'ral still,
Heaven gives its counterpoise to every ill;
Nor let us murmur at our stinted powers,
When kindness, love, and concord may be ours.
The gift of ministering to others' ease,
To all her sons impartial she decrees;
The gentle offices of patient love,
Beyond all flattery, and all price above;
The mild forbearance at a brother's fault,
The angry word suppress'd, the taunting thought;
Subduing and subdued, the petty strife,
Which clouds the colour of domestic life;
The sober comfort, all the peace which springs
From the large aggregate of little things;
On these small cares of daughter, wife, or friend,
The almost sacred joys of home depend:
There, Sensibility, thou best mayst reign,
Home is thy true legitimate domain.
A solitary bliss thou ne'er couldst find,
Thy joys with those thou lov'st are intertwin'd;
And he whose helpful tenderness removes
The rankling thorn which wounds the breast he loves,
Smoothes not another's rugged path alone,
But clears th' obstruction which impedes his own.
The hint malevolent, the look oblique,
The obvious satire, or implied dislike;

The sneer equivocal, the harsh reply,
And all the cruel language of the eye;
The artful injury, whose venom'd dart
Scarce wounds the hearing, while it stabs the heart;
The guarded phrase, whose meaning kills, yet told,
The list'ner wonders how you thought it cold;
Small slights, neglect, unmix'd perhaps with hate,
Make up in number what they want in weight.
These, and a thousand griefs minute as these,
Corrode our comfort and destroy our ease.
As feeling tends to good or leans to ill,
It gives fresh force to vice or principle;
'Tis not a gift peculiar to the good,
'Tis often but the virtue of the blood:
And what would seem compassion's moral flow
Is but a circulation swift or slow:
But to divert it to its proper course,
There wisdom's power appears, there reason's force:
If ill directed it pursue the wrong,
It adds new strength to what before was strong;
Breaks out in wild irregular desires,
Disorder'd passions, and illicit fires;
Without deforms the man, depraves within,
And makes the work of God the slave of sin.
But if religion's bias rule the soul,
Then Sensibility exalts the whole;
Sheds its sweet sunshine on the moral part,
Nor wastes on fancy what should warm the heart.
Cold and inert the mental powers would lie,
Without this quick'ning spark of Deity.
To melt the rich materials from the mine,
To bid the mass of intellect refine,
To bend the firm, to animate the cold,
And Heaven's own image stamp on nature's gold;
To give immortal mind its finest tone,
Oh, Sensibility! is all thy own.
This is th' ethereal flame which lights and warms,
In song enchants us, and in action charms.
'Tis this that makes the pensive strains of Gray
Win to the open heart their easy way;
Makes the touch'd spirit glow with kindred fire,
When sweet Serena's poet wakes the lyre:
Makes Portland's face its brightest rapture wear,
When her large bounty smoothes the bed of care:
'Tis this that breathes through Sévigné's fair page,
That nameless grace which soothes a second age;
'Tis this, whose charms the soul resistless seize,
And give Boscawen half her power to please."

Justly to appreciate the value of her writings to her contemporaries, it is necessary to refer to the history of the times in which they were first published. Her comprehensive and exact discernment of the peculiar moral evils incident to her then present generation, and her adroit adaptation of appropriate counteractives, deserve all the admiration, all the praise, all the grateful affection ever offered in tribute to her genius and her goodness.

The different conditions of society at different epochs grow out of intermediate comminglings of means naturally tending, or providentially overruled, to produce those changes, and many improvements in the personal, domestic, and social practices, habitudes, and opinions of Englishwomen may undoubtedly, and without fear of mistake, be attributed to the influence of Hannah More; in those social practices, habitudes, and opinions, comprehending all that relates to and lies between the minute details of cottage cookery and the deportment of regal personages. She wrote more books, which passed through more frequent editions, and were printed in more numerous languages, and read by greater multitudes of persons, than any other authoress upon record. All of them had more or less a beneficial tendency, and never did personal example more cogently enforce preceptive exhortation, than in the instance of this admirable woman.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE POETESSES.

A.D. 1833—OCTOBER.

Mary-Jane Jewsbury.

"But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity."—ANDREW MARVEL.

MARY-JANE JEWSBURY.

MR. THOMAS JEWSBURY, a cotton-spinner and lacemaker who had mills and a residence at Measham, five miles from Ashby-de-la-Zouche, married, in the year 1799, Miss Maria Smith, a handsome, amiable, and clever woman; and their eldest child, Mary-Jane Jewsbury, was born on the 23rd of October, 1800. Her earliest years were spent in that abundance of corporeal comforts to which the profits of manufacturing prosperity are commonly applied. She was sent to a school kept by a Miss Adams, at Shenston, and there passed through the routine of ordinary female instruction. Her love of reading, although early manifested, found neither encouragement nor guidance, and took the form rather of desultory enjoyment than that of a consistent pursuit of knowledge. Dutiful attachment to her parents, and protecting affection for her brothers and sister, counterbalanced in some measure the isolating conscious-

ness of intellectual superiority, softened the rigour of her resolute will, and restrained the impulsive eagerness of her temperament. Earnest sincerity, sound practical sense, and a vivid imagination, soon won the unappreciating and instinctive homage of her family.

The history of her mind in childhood is left chiefly to conjecture: its most peculiar points she often alluded to in after life; its general course doubtless resembled that of other aspirants who have shaped their own way to fame. Slight incentives suffice in childhood to educe and to direct the flow of mind. Praise casually received for knowing, or for wishing to know, seeing a name upon a title-page, admiration of the terse form in which some recognized truth is conveyed by prose or verse, concurring with the inherent self-suspicion of possessing latent power, may cause emulative attempts at clothing thoughts in apt words—may evoke the wish to influence opinions and to win fame. Then follow the examination and selection of words to convey spontaneous ideas, or to adorn matter-of-fact narrations; the test by ear and eye of those best fitted for imitating metres and rhymes which haunt the memory with harmonious sounds; these studious researches tending to enlarge the tyro's acquaintance with the copiousness of the language, and to enrich the intellect with the various forms, colourings, tintings, and inflexions of verbal signification; increasing thereby the capacity for enjoying the works of the ablest authors, and cultivating critical taste simultaneously with practical improvement of style.

The simple name of a nursery-book, 'Aunt Mary's Tales for her Nieces,' or some other, has, ere now, taught a thoughtful child to infer,—Then a woman could write and publish what she had seen and known; and why should not I, when I grow up, do the like? I should not

have been commended if I had not attended, observed, and remembered in one particular instance, nor if I had failed to direct my curiosity and my inquiries aright in another, and thus I am encouraged to attend, to observe, and to investigate. In such, and in similar trifles have lain the tiny seeds, which germinating vigorously, and cultivated long and with sedulous toil, have often, ere now, produced goodly plants, pleasant flowers, and useful fruits. By some such means, no doubt, the genius of Mary-Jane Jewsbury was directed in childhood towards literary eminence; and, against a thousand formidable forms of discouragement, she struggled onward to attain it. Impressed with the sense, though probably then unacquainted with the words of Daniel in his 'Musophilus,'—

> "This is the thing that I was born to do,
> This is my scene; this part I must fulfil,"

—her life exemplified them.

It is certain that her sympathy with family cares, and her industrious participation in household occupations, lightened the troubles of her parents when ill success in business embarrassed their circumstances, and obliged her father to give up his cotton-mills at Measham, and to remove with his wife and children to Manchester. Her letters to her mother, written in 1819, during a temporary absence on a visit to some relations, are fluent and easy, full of good sense and right feeling, indicating superior ability, keenness of observation, and a clever application of a large fund of miscellaneous information. The death of Mrs. Jewsbury, her mother, took place at a later period of the same year, and the care of the orphan family, consisting of her younger sister, and of five brothers, one of them being an infant of a month old, devolved entirely upon Mary-Jane Jewsbury.

To the consolation of her father, who was a man of strong family affections, and to all the duties of this trying exigency, she devoted herself at once, and with unremitting assiduity, sustained the burden during a period of thirteen years. It is not asserted that she ever attained to excellence as a systematic or practical domestic manager, but she successfully endeavoured to promote the comfort of her only surviving parent, and consistently laboured, by means carefully selected, to train up her brothers and sister for usefulness and permanent happiness.

In the year 1821, she commenced a regular course of reading, exercising herself at the same time in the composition of prose and verse. It appears to have been about this period that she addressed a letter to Wordsworth, whose poetry she admired, but to whom she was utterly unknown. Its purport was to ask of him that question so often asked by obscure aspirants of poets with whose sentiments they have sympathised, in the eager hope that those poets will sympathise with them, and, in spite of all domestic and social impediments, enable them to emerge from obscurity by revealing the precious secret, bestowing the sacred talisman, unravelling the tangled clue of literary success. In her case this application led to the establishment of epistolary correspondence, to personal and family intercourse, and to steady friendship, without any direct benefit to her as an authoress, but with those results of mental improvement which were far more conducive to her permanent good.

Mr. Aston, the editor of 'The Manchester Gazette,' being acquainted with her father, had the honour of first printing and publishing a little poem of hers; and being impressed with a high opinion of her talents, he introduced her to Mr. Alaric-Alexander Watts, who, from

the latter part of the year 1822, edited 'The Leeds Intelligencer,' and three years afterwards resigned that paper, removed his residence to Manchester, and became the editor of 'The Manchester Courier,' and of an annual volume, called 'The Literary Souvenir,' to which Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Montgomery, and Mary-Jane Jewsbury, were contributors. Mr. Watts, who married Zillah Wiffen, the sister of Jeremiah-Holme Wiffen, the historian of the House of Russell, was less than two years older than Miss Jewsbury, and with the generous zeal of youth and of a noble heart, he aided her in the work of mental culture, gave publicity to her occasional poems, urged the composition of her first book, 'Phantasmagoria,' and found a publisher for it.

In 1825 Mr. Watts gave up the local newspaper. In 1828 and 1829 he edited an annual, called 'The Poetical Album, or Register of Modern Fugitive Poetry,' to which, and to several other volumes of a similar kind, Miss Jewsbury became a distinguished contributor. 'The Literary Magnet,' 'The Literary Souvenir,' and 'The Amulet,' were likewise indebted for much of their popularity to her pen.

At a later period she also wrote for 'The Athenæum,' and many of the best pieces which she ever composed still remain entombed, though embalmed, in the thick quartos of that work.

Mrs. Owen of Rhyllon, in her Memoir of her sister, Mrs. Hemans, thus relates the circumstances of Miss Jewsbury's first sojourn in Wales:—"She had long admired the writings of Mrs. Hemans with all the enthusiasm which characterised her temperament; and having been for some time in correspondence with her, she eagerly sought for an opportunity of knowing her more nearly, and, with this view, determined upon passing a part of the summer and

autumn of 1828 in the neighbourhood of St. Asaph. No better accommodation could be found for her than a very small dwelling, called Primrose Cottage, a corruption of its original appellation of Pumrhôs—the Five Commons. The place in itself was as little attractive as a cottage in Wales could well be, and its closeness to the road took away even from its rurality; but it possessed the advantage of being not more than half a mile from Rhyllon, and it had its little garden and its roses, and its green turf and pure air; and these to an inhabitant of Manchester, which Miss Jewsbury then was, were things of health and enjoyment. Thither then she repaired with the young sister and brothers, to whom she had long and well performed the duties of a mother; and there Mrs. Hemans found her established on her own return from Wavertree at the end of July. It may well be conceived how soon a feeling of warm interest and thorough understanding sprang up between two minds so rarely gifted, and both so intent upon consecrating their gifts to the highest and holiest purposes. Yet it was scarcely possible to imagine two individual natures more strikingly contrasted; the one so intensely feminine, so susceptible and imaginative, so devoted to the tender and the beautiful; the other endowed with masculine energies, with a spirit that seemed born for ascendancy, with strong powers of reasoning, fathomless profundity of thought, and feelings like those of her own Julia, 'flashing forth at intervals with sudden and Vesuvian splendour, making the beholder aware of depths beyond his vision.' With all this she possessed warm and generous affections, a peculiar faculty for identifying herself with the tastes and predilections of those she loved; and in conversation, when embodying the conceptions of her own 'ever salient mind,'

a singular talent for eliciting thoughts from others, which reminded one of the magic properties of the divining rod. From early years she had had to contend with that precarious and suffering state of health so often the accompaniment of the restless ardent spirit, which

"O'er informs its tenement of clay;"

she came into Wales, indeed, completely as an invalid, but was soon sufficiently recruited to enter with full enjoyment into all the novelties around her, to pass long mornings in the dingle, to take distant rides on her donkey, surrounded by a troop of juvenile knights-errant, and to hold levees in the tent she had contrived as a temporary addition to her tiny dwelling, whose wicket-gate can now never be passed by those still left to remember the converse of those bright hours without a gush of mournful recollections. Many of the poems in her 'Lays of Leisure Hours,' which she dedicated to Mrs. Hemans, 'in remembrance of the summer passed in her society,' were written in this little cottage. Some of them were immediately addressed to her, particularly that 'To an Absent One,' and the first of the series of 'Poetical Portraits' in the same volume was meant to describe her. The picture of Egeria, in 'The Three Histories,' written by Miss Jewsbury some time afterwards, was avowedly taken from the same original, and, allowing for a certain degree of idealization, is drawn with no less truth than delicacy." *

Miss Jewsbury has herself acknowledged the softening effect produced upon her own character by contact with that of Mrs. Hemans; and that to her example she owed the habit of looking for beautiful and pleasant things, and discerning them even among the harshest realities of life.

* 'Memoir,' p. 141-3.

The writer of this Essay is indebted to Miss Geraldine Ensor Jewsbury and to Mr. Francis Jewsbury, for the perusal of a collection of their sister's private letters, and of the manuscript Journal of her Voyage and Residence in India. All her letters, however hasty and unstudied, bear marks of a fine mind under the steady and habitual control of the highest principles. Her pen ennobles all it touches, and gives interest even to trivial details. Those letters throw a clear light upon one important feature of her character—the strength and constancy of its attachment—showing her father, her sister, her brothers, and her friends, to have been continually present to her thoughts, and that her best affections and most sedulous cares ever hovered protectingly over all the members of the paternal household. Her care for her young sister, throughout a long series of years, extended even to the most minute particulars of dress which could tend to personal comfort or respectability of appearance; to the gratification of her tastes and wishes by gifts, permissions to participate in innocent pleasures, kind words, and the communication of agreeable information; to placing her under the instruction of persons competent to conduct her education in a manner suited to develop her talents; to the communication of feelings of interest and attachment so strong and so constant as to work upon her sympathy and awaken reciprocal regard; to the administration of reproof, suited with discriminating sagacity, to the faults which she discerned, and desired to correct; and to the inculcation of precepts full of real wisdom, and adapted to the modification of natural tendencies, to the formation of a fine womanly character, and to the consecration of heart, soul, and conduct, to life's highest probationary end.

A woman devoting herself thus assiduously to domestic and family duties, while applying her mind to study, and simultaneously pursuing a course of literary compositions, while forming friendships with the principal authors and authoresses of the day, and finding the confirmation of her secret aspirations in their approval and applause, must have possessed not only an extraordinary mind, but also an enlarged and noble heart.

Dreading, perhaps, to be instrumental in communicating doubt, or in eliciting presumptuous inquiry, her advice on theological and religious subjects tended rather towards dogmatism. She had painfully acquired an assured belief in the vital doctrines of Christianity, and she enforced their reception upon other persons as a bounden duty, with too little of that persuasive appeal to the understanding, feelings, and experience, of which the personal teaching of Our Lord and of his Apostles affords so many striking and affecting instances.

Among her friends she numbered Mrs. Hofland, Mrs. Henry Coleridge, the Roscoes, the Dilkes, the S. C. Halls, the Chorleys, De Quincy, and many other distinguished members of the world of letters. Her society was much courted; and in London, as well as among her numerous acquaintance in various parts of England, her brilliant conversation confirmed and increased the reputation won by her writings.

Having, in the year 1831, consented to become the wife of the Rev. William K. Fletcher, one of the chaplains of the Hon. East India Company, she subsequently accepted the invitation of her admiring friend, Mrs. Hughes, the sister of Mrs. Hemans, and then the wife of the rector of Penegoes, Montgomeryshire; and assembling her family party there in the July of the following year, was married to Mr. Fletcher

in the church of that parish, by her hospitable host, on the 1st of August, 1832. Having already commenced her preparations to accompany Mr. Fletcher to India, she took a final farewell of her family, full of projects for their comfort, and plans of future usefulness: and made the wedding tour through some of the wildest solitudes of the Principality, a part of the last long journey which she ever travelled upon British ground.

In London, Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher were received by hospitable and zealous friends. They embarked from Gravesend on board "The Victory," East Indiaman, commanded by Captain Christopher Biden; and the first entry in the journal of her voyage bears the date of September 20, 1832. This record is deeply interesting as a manifestation of character. Without deriving materials from that tempting source, the acts and words of her fellow-passengers, without indulging an artistic propensity to sketch the individuals with whom secluded proximity made her thoroughly acquainted; in short, without scandal and without gossip, winning the respect of her readers by abstaining from the readiest topics of remark, Mrs. Fletcher enlivens the monotony of routine by directing attention to every striking change of weather and variety of appearance in the world of waters; its colours, its tints, its lights and shades, its dark and its luminous, its morning, afternoon, evening, and midnight aspects. Crabbe himself has not more accurately noted the ocean's wonderful varieties; nor Byron more deeply felt its awful greatness. Then she pictures forth the glory of the moon and stars, the forms, tinctures, and sublime movements of the clouds, in masses, airy vapours, silvery haze, and obscuring fog; the inhabitants of the great deep, and the winged watchers attendant on its billows. Her own lively interest glows in her words,

and communicates the eagerness with which the sharks were discerned from the ship; and the albatrosses, shot by marine sportsmen, brought in the boat, and examined on the deck by the poetical wife and the scientific husband. Again, the vivid contrasts occasionally drawn between scenes peculiar to life on shore and life at sea, the sort of interlude presented between the part of existence done and acted out in Europe, and the part yet to be entered upon and fulfilled in Asia; the reflections and expectations, the meditative musings, acute commentaries, and natural overflowings of rich thought and ardent feeling from the changeful moods of a true poetess, written avowedly for the perusal of the relations whom she loved best, and the friends whom she honoured most—among the latter being a Wordsworth and a Hemans—convey altogether a very engaging and attaching representation of a guileless and ardent woman of genius, disciplining herself incessantly

"To fix the lifted eye on things sublime."

Her 'Verses composed during a very discomposing breeze,' a comic strain; and 'The Burden of the Sea,' a didactic one, are not among her best effusions; though there is in the latter a very fine half stanza:—.

"The billows, that engulph a fleet,
And desolate a thousand homes,
The sea-bird skims with careless feet,
The nautilus securely roams!"

The voyagers spent the Christmas week of the year 1832, on shore, at Port Louis, in the island of Ceylon, and put to sea again on the 29th of December.

Many passages of her journal are very eloquent. Under the date of January 9, 1833, she writes: "We have had two sunsets that not merely baffle description, but render Turner and Martin's gorgeousness quaint and tame. Fancy a city full of majestic buildings on fire; fancy a crowd of

violet coloured mountains hemming in the flames, the sky beyond them dusky and sullen, looking on, as it were. Fancy all this, and you have some idea of a last evening's sunset. The other occurred a few evenings before, and whilst less gorgeous, was more singular; I should rather say more supernatural. The flame colour of the clouds in the west was mixed and tinctured with a deep, exquisite rose, which was reflected again upon the opposite clouds surrounding the moon. They, however, owing to her own peculiar light, were dimmer—the hue of a dying fire, edged and flecked with a faint silvery green and white, the sea beneath might have been strewn with emeralds. One mass of attendant cloud happened to be of a peculiarly towering form, and to stand out prominently from the horizon. I could liken it to nothing but the pillar of fire that nightly rose over the Jewish wanderers in the desert. Gradually, as the light from the sun decreased, and that of the moon strengthened, the flame colour on the clouds round the latter faded, the green and the grey became snow white; till at length the planet of the night, dissipating every evil between herself and our eyes, shone solitary in the heavens, with an effulgence that to more than myself proved exhausting. I ought to mention that both days our weather had been broken by squalls, consequently both were disturbed sunsets; disturbed, however, into increased magnificence and beauty. By-the-way, I have never mentioned the appearance of a squall; one is coming now, with rain: there is a line of mist along the horizon which seems to walk the waters, nearing the ship every moment. When severe and much extended, the sea presents the appearance of a field of ripe barley bowing before the wind; there is the same whiteness, the same undulation of surface."

On the 2nd of March, 1833, she landed at Bombay, and

was hospitably received at the house of the Archdeacon. Proceeding to Hurnee with Mr. Fletcher, they remained there until the end of May, when Mr. Fletcher received orders to proceed to Sholapoor, which they reached on the 17th of June. Entering with animated expectation upon every new scene, keenly observing every point of contrast between the Asiatic and European aspects of nature, art, and social life, and every peculiarity of local manners and habits; and more especially studying the character of the people in connection with their idolatrous worship, she carefully prepared herself for usefulness among them. Drought prevailed at that period in and around Sholapoor; it produced a famine; and Mr. Fletcher's principal employment on his arrival was to mitigate the sufferings of the emaciated and perishing population. Accompanying him one day in this mission of mercy, they found a native man lying dead upon the steps of an idol temple, having his little girl clasped in his arms. Finding that the child was alive, Mrs. Fletcher took it home with her, provided for its wants, and placed it finally under proper care. The anxiety and over exertion of Mr. Fletcher brought on a dangerous illness, and for seven weeks his excellent wife nursed him assiduously. On his recovery, obtaining a medical certificate that his health would not bear that climate, they set out on the 26th of September, on their return to Hurnee.

The last entry she ever made in her journal was dated "Babelgaum, September 26, 1833." A few days afterwards, having proceeded as far as Poonah, she was seized with cholera, sank calmly under it, and died there on the 4th of October. Her remains were interred in the cemetery at Poonah.

It was a saying among the ancient Saxon poets, when

one of their heroes died in peace, that "He went on his way." This expressive phrase suggesting, that having accomplished one stage of life's journey, the traveller through time had now entered upon another; like the sparrow flying into and along the bright banqueting-hall of King Edwin and out again into darkness. A mind of such great promise rendered frustrate, of such undoubted power scarce unfolded, indicates more strikingly than a thousand homilies, that the visible world is but the vestibule of human existence.

Her mind had great scope, and possessed both vigorous strength and analytic delicacy. It tended chiefly towards metaphysics and a poetic form of moral philosophy.

Of her, Lætitia-Elizabeth Landon said:—"I never met with any woman who possessed her powers of conversation. If her language had a fault, it was its extreme perfection. It was like reading an eloquent book, full of thought and poetry. She died too soon; and what noble aspirings, what generous enthusiasm, what kindly emotions, went down to the grave with her unfulfilled destiny! There is no word that will so thoroughly describe her as *high-minded*, she was such in every sense of the word. There was no envy, no bitterness about her; and it must be a lofty nature that delights in admiration."* This is true and honest praise, though the last proposition is untenable.

Soon after having received the tidings of her friend's death, Mrs. Hemans thus wrote of her:—"How much deeper power seemed to lie coiled up, as it were, in the recesses of her mind than was ever manifested to the world in her writings! Strange and sad does it seem that only the broken music of such a spirit should have been

* Laman Blanchard's 'Life and Literary Remains of L. E. L.,' vol. i., p. 261, note.

given to the earth—the full and finished harmony never drawn forth. Yet I would rather, a thousand times, she should have perished thus in the path of her chosen duties, than have seen her become the merely brilliant creature of London literary life, at once the queen and slave of some heartless coterie, living upon those poor succès de société which I think utterly ruinous to all that is lofty, and holy, and delicate, in the nature of a highly-endowed woman. I put on mourning for her with a deep feeling of sadness. I never expected to meet her again in this life; but there was a strong chain of interest between us, that spell of mind on mind, which once formed can never be broken. I felt, too, that my whole nature was understood and appreciated by her; and this is a sort of happiness which I consider the most rare in all earthly affection."

Wordsworth says:—"Her enthusiasm was ardent, her piety steadfast; and her great talents would have enabled her to be eminently useful in the path to which she had been called. The opinion she entertained of her own performances, given to the world under her maiden name, was modest and humble; indeed far below her merits, as is often the case with those who are making trial of their powers to discover what they are fit for. In one quality—quickness in the motions of her mind—she was, in the author's estimation, unrivalled." *

None but vain and self-conceited persons dislike the egotism of genius. To kindred minds it is a welcome revelation which excites intense sympathy.

The following letter, derived from 'The Athenæum,' 1834, page 473; and from the 'Memoir of Mrs. Hemans by her Sister,' forms an autobiographical record of great value. It was addressed to Mrs. Hemans.

* Wordsworth's Poetical Works, vol. v., note to 'Liberty.'

"The passion for literary distinction consumed me from nine years old. I had no advantages—great obstacles—and now (1832) when from disgust I cannot write a line to please myself, I look back with regret to the days when facility and audacity went hand in hand; I wish in vain for the simplicity which neither dreaded criticism nor knew fear. Intense labour has, in some measure, supplied the deficiency of early idleness and common-place instruction. Intercourse with those, who were once distant and bright as the stars, has become a thing of course. I have not been unsuccessful in my own career; but the period of timidity and sadness is now come, and with my foot upon the threshold of a new life and a new world

"'I would lie down like a tired child,
And weep away this life of woe.'

I can bear blame, if seriously given, and accompanied by that general justice which I feel due to me; banter is that which I cannot bear, and the prevalence of which in passing criticism, and the dread of which in my own person, greatly contributes to my determination of letting many years elapse before I write another book.

"Unfortunately, I was twenty-one before I became a reader, and I became a writer almost as soon. It is the ruin of all the young talent of the day that reading and writing are simultaneous. We do not educate ourselves for literary enterprise. Some never awake to the consciousness of the better things neglected; and if one like myself is at last seized upon by a blended passion for knowledge and for truth, he has probably committed himself by a series of jejune efforts—the standard of inferiority is erected, and the curse of mere cleverness clings to his name.

"I would gladly burn almost everything I ever wrote,

if so be that I might start now with a mind that has seen, read, thought, and suffered, somewhat at least approaching to a preparation. Alas! alas! we all sacrifice the palm-tree to obtain the temporary draught of wine! We slay the camel that would bear us through the desert, because we will not endure a momentary thirst.

"I have done nothing to live, and what I have yet done must pass away with a thousand other blossoms, the growth, the beauty, and oblivion of a day. The powers which I feel, and of which I have given promise, may mature, may stamp themselves in act; but the spirit of despondency is strong upon the future exile, and I fear they never will. In the language of Keats—

"'I feel the long grass growing o'er my heart.'

"My 'Three Histories' *has* most of myself *in them*, but they are fragmentary. Public report has fastened the Julia upon me. The childhood, the opening years, and many of the after opinions are correct; but all else is fabulous.

"In the best of everything I have done you will find one leading idea—Death; all thoughts, all images, all contrasts of thoughts and images, are derived from living much in the valley of that shadow; from having learned life rather in the vicissitudes of man than woman; from the mind being Hebraic. My poetry, except some half-dozen pieces, may be consigned to oblivion; but in all you would find the sober hue, which to my mind's eye blends equally with the golden glow of sunset, and the bright green of spring; and is seen equally in the temple of delight *as* in the tomb of decay and separation. I am melancholy by nature, but cheerful on principle."

There is no real incongruity in the statements that

literary ambition preyed upon her from the time she was nine years of age, and that she did not begin to read until she was twenty-one. By the latter she doubtless meant that until then she had not applied herself studiously to a regular series of books. Her knowledge of English and French literature, and the rich and various stores of general information ultimately laid up in her capacious memory for the use of her inventive faculties, would have done honour to the tutelage even of a Hannah More.

In the process of self-education she had not only much to acquire, she had also much to unlearn. Obsolete phrases of a local dialect haunt her prose, probably derived from the daily conversation of uncultivated associates, caught up and made habitual before her taste was formed on purer models. The mercantile idiom, "I will write you," occasionally occurs; and an odd substitution of the preposition "of," in the proper place of the preposition "for," too often disfigures her style:—"I liked it more than I have liked anything *of* years," "He has not seen you *of* a year," &c. &c. This misuse of the prepositions occurs frequently in the epistles of Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scotland, who, for instance, desires Cardinal Wolsey to "thank his grace (King Henry VIII.) *of* his diamond that his grace sent me."* Half-consciousness of this habitual fault may probably have induced, by way of counteraction, that sort of fantastical daintiness which sometimes vitiates even her familiar letters. In a writer of less merit these faults might be suffered to pass unremarked; they are mentioned here chiefly in confirmation of the fact that, notwithstanding her natural fluency of expression, and clever aptitude in the selection of words, the general correctness and elegance of her diction resulted rather from vigilant care

* See Mrs. Everett Green's 'Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies.'

than from well-accustomed habit. The resolute industry with which she strove against all obstacles for excellence, can only be appreciated by the separate consideration of at least a few of them.

The desire of literary distinction instead of being inconsistent with the settled apprehension of death, often accompanies and grows out of it. "Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they are withered," is the eager and general voice of worldly regret; and only a difference of choice between temporal enjoyments separates the idle reveller in wine and smiles from the laborious candidate for critical commendation.

Miss Jewsbury received much praise, and was enabled by experience to appreciate its just value, as a testimony that public favour opens a way to public usefulness; while she also learned that it cannot quench or allay that craving of the immortal soul for honour and approbation which only Divine guerdons can satisfy. "Death"—that one emphatic word—may be taken as an epitome of her religious and spiritual history. Whether it assumed the form of predestined destruction to youth, and life, and all earth's pleasures, or that of the terrific precursor of an uncertain futurity, this awful phantom haunted her early and ceaselessly. How it first arose she has not told. Perhaps it was in childhood or youth, from witnessing the act, or the effect of lost vitality upon some human being, some pet animal, or even some tree or plant; perhaps from some such sentence as that in Johnson's 'Rasselas,' "that what now acts must continue its agency, and what now thinks must think on for ever." The significance of every incident and circumstance of daily existence was enhanced by this dreadful shadow. In the fresh springing of every flower she foresaw the dust of its

decay. In every symptom of sickness or hazard of bodily disaster she felt the premonitions of a sudden entrance upon a dark, illimitable futurity. What is this inward principle which inhabits and calls the body mine? this self-conscious subject which apprehends all objects as apart and exterior? Why am I here, thinking and feeling at this precise period, in the midst of all the millions of sentient and intelligent beings who have preceded me on this earth, who are living and dying around me, who will follow and erase my tread? What is time, which fleets along and bears me on its course? What was the origin of evil, and why am I its subject? What is the design of my Creator in placing me among these many miseries, shut in by these impenetrable mysteries? These awful questions, to which every reflective mind has to work out its own answers, or to find its own solace, must deeply have perplexed and harassed hers.

Scepticism, in one form or other, seems to have been through life her besetting temptation, and in contending with it her faith was exercised, strengthened, and increased. A weaker mind, with her ambitious tendencies, would have found its most irritating trials in her external position and circumstances, instead of in those

> "Thoughts that strove with time, and change, and anguish,
> For some high place where faith her wing might rest,"

by which she was experimentally taught—"That religion is not intuitively true, but a matter of deduction and inference; that a conviction of its truth is not forced upon every one, but left to be by some collected with heedful attention to premises; this as much constitutes religious probation, as much affords sphere, scope, opportunity, for right and wrong behaviour, as anything whatever does."*

* Bishop Butler's 'Analogy,' part ii., chap. vi.

The intuitive sense of dependence upon Almighty Power, and the conviction of moral obligation to a Creator and Preserver infinitely good, the testimony of the reasoning faculty and of the moral controller to the principles of right and wrong, were doubtless strong in her. Assuredly she read, studied, prayed, and light emanated from the pages of Scripture sufficient for her guidance, and increasingly brightening and dispelling cloud after cloud, though never shining forth with heart-cheering splendour.

Of her works separately published the principal were—'Phantasmagoria, or Essays on Life and Literature;' 'Letters to the Young;' 'Lays for Leisure Hours;' and 'The Three Histories.' All of them attained a high degree of popularity. The last is reckoned indisputably her best.

Her 'Three Histories' comprise those of an Enthusiast, a Nonchalant, and a Realist. In the first there is certainly a misnomer; the heroine as a child might in parts be deemed enthusiastic, but grows up into a selfish woman of genius, full of worldly ambition, which predominates strongly over her few and weak social affections; valuing her rare abilities and attainments merely as forming a lever to raise her into the sphere of fashionable distinction; delighting neither in literature nor in anything else for its own sake; not loving with that true affection which rests satisfied in finding an appropriate object, while regarding all adventitious advantages as pleasant superfluities, Julia seeks not the gratification of her friends, nor her own in theirs, nor in the joy of conscious usefulness. Her genius is made a wretched slave of the lamp, a ministering drudge to vanity and worldliness. Having an independent fortune, she neither writes for bread, nor for the additional comforts or luxuries of terrene existence: fame, the trumpet-sound, the far reverberation, the adula-

tion of strangers, the establishment of a name in the records of futurity, is the great object of her life. Julia is not a genuine enthusiast, devoting heart and soul, genius and its fruits, to the promotion of any one extraneous and special purpose. She is not ennobled by her fine faculties, but debased; and having sown the wind, no reader pities her when she reaps the whirlwind.

This tale evinces much ability in the delineation of character. The grandmother deserves to live and last among the inhabitants of our popular world of fiction.

The 'Nonchalant' would have been more justly named the 'Brokenhearted.' There is a dreamy, sickly haze over this supposititious autobiography, but it bears, perhaps, the record of much personal feeling. The gloomy hero resembles a planet, which, passing through deep masses of cloud, pierces them every now and then with rays which promise a triumphant emergence.

The 'Realist' merits its title, and is conceived in a strong and healthful, though somewhat hard state of mind.

It is not so much the ability displayed in the construction of either of these 'Histories' that impresses the reader with respect for Miss Jewsbury's genius, as the combined effect of the "Three:" the able depiction of so many distinctly-marked characters carrying with it the conviction of unusual skill, and of still latent power.

The following pieces are specimens of her average merit in poetry:—

THE WEEPER AT THE SEPULCHRE.

"A sound in yonder glade,
But not of fount or breeze,
A sound—but of the whispering made
By the palm and the olive-trees;
It is not the minstrel's lute,
Nor the swell of the night-bird's song,
Nor the city's hum, when all else is mute,
By echo borne along.

'T is a voice—the Saviour's own—
'Woman, why weepest thou?'
She turns—and her grief is for ever flown,
And the shade that dimmed her brow;
He is there, her risen Lord,
No more to know decline;
He is there, with peace in his every word,
The wept one—still divine.

'My father's throne to share,
As King, as God I go,
But a Brother's heart will be with me there,
For my brethren left below!'
The weeper is laid in dust,
Her Lord is throned on high,
But ours may be still that weeper's trust,
And ours that Lord's reply.

Mourner—'mid nature's bloom,
Dimming its light with tears,—
And captive—to whom the lone dark room
Grows darker yet with fears,—
And spirit—that like a bird
Rests not on sea or shore,—
The voice in the olive-glade once heard,
'Hear ye—and weep no more!'

Passing Away.

"I asked the stars, in the pomp of night,
Gilding its blackness with crowns of light,
Bright with beauty, and girt with power,
Whether eternity were not their dower;
And dirge-like music stole from their spheres
Bearing this message to mortal ears:

'We have no light that hath not been given;
We have no strength but shall soon be riven;
We have no power wherein man may trust;
Like him are we things of time and dust;
And the legend we blazon with beam and ray,
And the song of our silence is "passing away."

We shall fade in our beauty, the fair and bright,
Like lamps that have served for a festal night;
We shall fall from our spheres, the old and strong
Like rose-leaves swept by the breeze along;
The worshipped as gods in the olden day,
We shall be like a vain dream—"passing away."

From the stars of heaven, and the flowers of earth,
From the pageant of power, and the voice of mirth,
From the mist of morn on the mountain's brow,
From childhood's song and affection's vow,
From all, save that o'er which soul bears sway,
Breathes but one record—"passing away."

"Passing away," sing the breeze and rill,
As they sweep in their course by vale and hill;
Through the varying scenes of each earthly clime,
'T is the lesson of nature, the voice of time;
And man at last, like his fathers grey,
Writes in his own dust—"passing away."' "

CHAPTER XVII.

THE POETESSES.

A.D. 1835. PART I.

Felicia-Dorothea Hemans.

"But oh, the price of bitter tears,
Paid for the lonely power,
That throws at last o'er desert years,
A darkly glorious dower!
Like flower-seeds, by the wild wind spread,
So radiant thoughts are strewed;
The soul whence those high gifts are shed
May faint in solitude!
And, who will think, when the strain is sung,
Till a thousand hearts are stirred,
What life-drops from the minstrel wrung
Have gushed with every word?"

MRS. HEMANS: 'The Diver.'

FELICIA-DOROTHEA HEMANS.

MR. GEORGE BROWNE, an eminent merchant of Liverpool, was by birth an Irishman, and traced his descent from a branch of the Sligo and Kilmaine family. In the year 1786, he married Felicia, daughter of Mr. Benedict-Paul Wagner, the Imperial and Tuscan Consul-General at Liverpool, and of his wife, Miss Elizabeth Haydock, of Rivington, in the county of Lancaster. Mrs. Browne was a woman of superior understanding, highly-cultivated talents, and refined taste; and all the children of this marriage who attained maturity were distinguished by

kindred qualities and accomplishments. Felicia-Dorothea, the fifth child, was born in Duke Street, Liverpool, on the 25th of September, 1793, and was early found to be endowed with the two most precious of all temporal gifts—beauty and genius.

Mr. Browne having suffered a great reverse of fortune, in consequence of the commercial difficulties which attended the close of the last century, broke up his establishment at Liverpool, and removed in the year 1800, with his wife and family, to the sea-coast of Denbighshire, in North Wales, where he tenanted the solitary old mansion-house of Gwrych, situated less than two miles to the westward of the little town of Abergele. The juvenile companions of Felicia Browne in this migration were her eldest brother, Thomas-Henry, born in 1787; her second brother, George-Baxter, and a sister named Eliza, her only surviving seniors; besides a brother named Claude-Scott, one year her junior, and a sister, Harriet-Mary, born in 1798, the youngest of the seven. Under the judicious instruction of her mother, Felicia Browne learned with facility the elements of general knowledge, evincing peculiar aptness for the acquisition of languages, for drawing, and for music; while deriving information with extraordinary quickness, clearness, and vividness of perception, from all things visible, audible, and tangible. The more she knew, the more she desired to know; and the eager spirit of inquiry was accompanied by ever-increasing ambition for the attainment of intellectual, moral, and religious excellence.

A sensitive person, however ingenuous the natural disposition may be, is always influenced in the sort and degree of communicativeness by the characters of the friends in whom confidence is placed; so that to each will

be imparted only that subject, and to that extent which is likely to meet with sympathy. A look, a word, a gesture, or the want of a look, a word, a gesture, will stop the flow, or stint its measure. Thus it happens that more or less reserve is maintained, even towards friends whom they dearly love, by the most spontaneous and guileless of human beings; for absolute and entire confidence being possible only in cases of perfect congeniality, can very rarely exist. Thoughtful children, whose knowledge of character is of course superficial, and who trust the most those on whose kindness they most rely, are often painfully shocked and disappointed at finding their minds' incipient workings despised, their questionings repelled, and their fresh feelings unshared by such friends. Happily for Felicia Browne, the singular combination in her mother's character of tenderness, intelligence, and judgment, encouraged confidence to the utmost; and while the gifted child poured out her thoughts and feelings, her difficulties and aspirations, she found habitually the sympathy of a maternal heart, and the kind guidance of a wise and pious counsellor. She needed no one to point out to her or to define for her what was praiseworthy, either in the things of sense, of intellect, or of moral feeling: natural affection led her to love, to seek, and to seize upon it, even before the faculty of judgment came into exercise. Besides this kind of instinctive tendency towards noble, beautiful, and refined sights, sounds, and qualities, she possessed that precious privilege of genius which enables children to comprehend and to appreciate the high principles and sentiments of their teacher, and to answer like the tone of a musical instrument to the congenial touch.

In the life of Mrs. Browne true religion was exemplified.

She seldom spoke upon the subject, unless by way of direct instruction; but her habitual look of care was set aside, and her fine countenance brightened with serene joy, as she daily read the Bible to her children, and tried to impress upon her little Felicia, whose thoughts were often wandering after birds' nests and new-blown primroses in the dingles, the heart-touching truths concerning a Divine Creator, Father, and Saviour. Among the earliest impressions which the gifted girl received from the Scriptures, or probably from any book, were the pastoral images of patriarchal life, the tents, the palm-trees, the fountains of the desert, the rocks, the reposing flocks, and the slow procession of the loaded camels. The effect produced upon ordinary children by pictorial illustrations is much fainter and slighter than that produced upon Felicia Browne was by words heard and read; for out of those words her mind made pictures, vivid and durable enough to serve in after years as the basis of accurate descriptions.

Her senses were acute, exact, and delicately fine; her temperament was sanguine, sensitive, and easily agitated, blending the liveliness, pathos, and piquancy of Irish music; her intellect was of that rare kind which, discerning things at a glance, and not by a process of reasoning, seizes on them and firmly grasps them as its own for ever.

The six first years of her life, passed in wealth and ease, seem to have left only the broad general impressions that conveniences and elegancies were familiar and congenial to her habits and feelings, and that the absence of them was a deprivation. The earliest remembrances on which in after years she liked to dwell were those of the seashore at Gwrych, when listening to the cadence of the waves, and watching the reflections of the sunset on the

expanse, she looked up from the perusal of 'Paul and Virginia,' and tried to realize the scenery of the story; or when, from the large window of the school-room, gazing across intervening meadows of an evening when the moon was up, she viewed the tossing billows, and heard their roar resounding from the silent mountains. While thus acknowledging the powerful effect of the combined spell cast by the beauty and sublimity of ocean, the solemnity of its never-ceasing voice, its perpetual restlessness, its endless varieties of appearance, fatigued and wore her excitable nerves. The motion of things without life or visible impulsion is a phenomenon which often terrifies imaginative children, and that terror not unfrequently subsides into durable awe. The recollection of storms and shipwrecks elsewhere, being added to these local impressions, caused her always to regard the sea as a symbol of disquietude.

Her sea-side home lay near to a range of magnificent mountains, near to cliffs hollowed out into a wondrous cavern set with stalactites and stalagmites, near brooks and rivers, and waterfalls, and near the fertile and lovely vale of Clwyd, often celebrated by native bards.

The districts lying along the northern coast of Wales are thickly marked with the memorials of pre-historic ages, with the fortresses, courts, and temples of the Ancient Britons, their funereal mounds, cairns, altars, and stone-chests, with Roman camps and roads, and Norman castles: they are also held sacred in local tradition as birth-places and homes of the native sovereign princes, and as the scenes of battles and other important events celebrated in the songs of the bards, and recorded in the histories and legends of the country.

The Pass of Cefn yr Ogo, in the immediate neighbour-

hood of Gwrych, has been the scene of many desperate conflicts between the Welsh princes with their forces and the invading armies of the Saxon, Norman, and Plantagenet kings of England; and it is believed that no spot in the Principality has been more thoroughly saturated with blood.

At eight years of age Felicia Browne wrote a little poem on the subject of her mother's birth-day. Even her childish lines were poetical and harmonious, select in diction, and correct in rhyme. Her natural aptness for the art of poetry was as manifest as that of the Servian Heyduc Kjurtschia for the occupation of a marksman, when the very first shot he ever fired hit the target—a feat which practised hands often failed in. Clever children soon become aware from the words and looks of their relations and friends, that progressive improvement is expected from them, and the ambition of surpassing former achievements is unceasingly stimulated by this conviction.

She was a joyous, sociable, and sportive child; agile in the race, elastic in the swing, ingenious in weaving garlands of flowers, in painting, decorating, and launching little ships, carolling the while as blithely as the birds, and even more sweetly. Yet hours there were when she preferred solitude alike to the presence of her darling playmates and to the companionship of her supremely beloved mother—hours when she silently wrought the rich tapestry of her own imaginings or revelled for the first time among the thoughts of one or other of the world's master-minds. There was an orchard at Gwrych to which she was fond of resorting upon such occasions, in order to isolate herself from all ordinary influences. The trees in it were old, or had acquired the gnarled aspect of age from proximity to the sea: in the sunny spring-time moss, be-

gemmed with primroses, cushioned their bases; lichens encrusted the trunks and boughs, and some of the branches, bent downward by the northern wind, offered themselves as wild settees or as steps to clefts higher up. Admiring the tinted petals that bestrewed the turf, and soothed by the bees' soft hum among the living blossoms, she delighted to climb into a nook in a favourite tree, and there, hidden like the birds' nests by screens of apple-bloom, to enjoy at once nature's dreamy stillness, the soft perfume, and Shakspeare's plays, interrupted now and then by the twigs which stirred to the light wind, and peeping up at the blue sky as her light canopy swayed to and fro, just realising her happiness, and then again yielding to absorption.

Deeply impressed by Shakspeare's delineations of character, and more especially of female character, she longed to be, or at least to personify, such of them as she most admired. Imogen and Beatrice were her favourites, for she was drawn towards them by the strong sympathy of conscious resemblance. Rosalind, an amalgamation of the two, would probably have concentrated her preference had the sorrows of that heroine equalled those of Imogen. In the midst of manifold enjoyments, and in the fullness of their gratification, Felicia Browne recognised the possession of a keen capacity for sorrow; and a lady having once imprudently said aloud of her, in her hearing, "That child is not made for happiness, her colour comes and goes too fast," the words shocked her spirits at the time, and often recurred to her memory as prophetic, until events realized them.

Apart from the painful participation which a precocious and affectionate girl must occasionally feel in a parent's cares, the buoyant yet tender Felicia Browne, at ten years of age, experienced her first grief in the death of her amiable eldest sister Eliza. She wrote some consola-

tory stanzas on the occasion, and inscribed them to her mother.

Vaguely feeling that she had to fulfil some peculiar purpose in the world by means of yet latent poetic ability, visions of future fame and future usefulness often floated through her fancy. She had a natural intolerance of all things base, and harsh, and coarse. Beauty, sublimity, and refinement she sought in all things, with a preference rather inclining towards minute details than extent or vastness. Her pursuits were spontaneous growths of unsuggested interests. She loved books as she loved the fresh air and sunshine, and she read them of her own accord and at her own free choice, for she had access to "an ample library."

The word *library*, when applied to a country house, usually means a mere accumulation of books, an accidental aggregate of multifarious lore. There are the wrecks and waifs of the late divine, the late lawyer, the late justice of the peace, the late militia officer, and the late agriculturist. There are the vellum MSS. of ruined abbeys, the black-letter quartos and Elizabethan folios, which have ancestrally descended through the hands of successive knights and squires, seldom opened and never read. There are the hereditary receipt-books of successively presiding dames, their several prayer-books, whole duties, novels, and fairy tales. There are the poems, the essays, and histories which for the last hundred and fifty years each generation of inhabitants has regularly bought and set up in showy bindings. There also, perchance, may be seen the shattered hacks of the district book-club, parochially settled at last after weary gyrations; annuals in faded finery, and huge masses of covered and coverless pamphlets, diminishing gradually under the frequent

peculations of a sentimental housemaid or a marauding cook.

Among Felicia Browne's favourite books were Home's tragedy of 'Douglas,' 'The Chronicle' of Froissart, and that pet of many households, 'Letters from Tripoli,' a work written by the sister-in-law of the English Consul at that port. Her choice from the earliest period denotes that she valued books in proportion to the quantity of aliment which they supplied to poetic growth. Nor were oral traditions lost upon her. All the popular superstitions of Wales have in them that "something more heroical" than common life, which the mind of an imaginative people has ever loved to feign of an unrecorded past, and of the uncomprehended mysteries of the surrounding natural world. One of the three species of animals which have peculiar prominence in the oldest of such traditions is the black, shaggy whish-hound. Departed spirits and malignant fiends are said to have appeared in the frightful form of dogs with flaming eye-balls; these terrible hounds usually hunt in packs, but occasionally a single dog pays a domiciliary visit, or suddenly becomes visible stalking grimly by the benighted traveller's side, or confronting the twilight rover in some narrow dell transfixes him with unearthly glaring eyes, and bewilders his senses with the ineffable horror of its howl.* Gwrych had the reputation of being haunted by one of these monsters, which was said to keep midnight watch at the end of the avenue. Courageous in conscious self-devotion to "God and all goodness," incredulous, yet eager for a glimpse of a preternatural visitant, she sallied forth, secretly and

* See 'Cambrian Tales,' by Jane Williams, in 'Ainsworth's Magazine' for June, 1849.

alone, one moonlight night for the encounter; but even her vivid imagination, wanting the adjuncts of ignorance and malady, failed to conjure up the fiery phantom.

Among her juvenile rhymes there is an 'Invocation to the Fairies' to visit her sister Harriet's grotto. It shows a general acquaintance with the habits usually assigned to the small people, and especially their gifts, their dances, and their music. She must often have heard Welshwomen sing the 'Torriad y Dydd'—The Break of Day, commonly called 'Can y Tylwyth Têg'—the fairies' song; seen in the turfy grass the bright green circles attributed to their footsteps, and heard of their presents made to the neat and industrious. Her request that they will bring fruit "in baskets made of rush," seems significant of her admiration of the pretty tiny baskets woven to contain bilberries by the Welsh children. After inviting the fairies to bring with them various musical instruments, she begs them at last to dance to the dulcet sound of the national harp, in which through real life, as well as in fairy tales, she took delight. Sensitive to the utmost degree, and exquisitely susceptible of pain, whether mental or physical, she shrunk from every form of it with instinctive dread, although she was by no means cowardly or timid. She loved the chivalry of war, but would have loathed its carnage. She liked to listen to the wind, and found in every several tree an Æolian harp of distinctive tone. Even the gale and the hurricane, in their wild gusts and magnificent careers, held over her a sort of fascination which enchained attention and gratified her fancy while wearing down her spirits to exhaustion. The rapid flitting of shadows in windy weather, when light clouds are scudding across the sky—a phenomenon familiar to every

observant child in a mountain land—seems early to have fixed her attention; and all Nature's teachings glowed as poetry within her.

Mountains, the sea, and London, have been pronounced important points in youthful training. Felicia Browne had long profited by the two first, and at eleven years of age she completed the mind-enlarging triad of sights, being taken to London by her parents on a visit, and spending the winter there with them. She had anticipated the event with fervid expectation—music, the drama, and works of art giving it a strong claim upon her imagination. She was taken to the theatres, to the opera-house, to other public places and exhibitions of various kinds, and shown all the ancient and modern wonders of the metropolis: nevertheless, keen as her capacity for such enjoyments was, the contrast of confined and crowded streets and of social constraint with the glory, freshness, and freedom of her mountain abode, forced from her in an early letter the confession that she felt "satiated with opera, park, and play, and longing to get away more than she ever did to come." * Some verses which she addressed about the same time to her youngest brother and sister, who were left in Wales, express also her earnest wish to rejoin them in their rural 'amusements.' Returning to Gwrych for the intervening months, she again accompanied her parents to London, and spent the following winter with them there. It was during one or other of these sojourns that in viewing the Bridgewater-Stafford Gallery her cordial out-spoken delight, and the familiar acquaintance which she betrayed with the recondite subjects of many of the pictures, attracted the attention and excited the admiring interest of a party of distinguished persons

* Chorley's 'Memorials,' vol. i., p. 27.

who chanced to be present. Her feeling for sculpture was as strong as for painting, and, if possible, still more intense. When led into a gallery of fine statues, the first sight struck her with such solemn joy, that, hastily interrupting the conversation of her friends, she uttered the involuntary exclamation, "Oh, hush! don't speak." From these two winters, thus spent, she derived more knowledge of the drama and of works of art than any unimaginative person could possibly conjecture; for, besides obtaining in many instances the embodiment of vague ideal forms, she found also suggestive aids to future poetic conceptions. She never again saw London.

Many years afterwards, she formed an intention of writing her autobiographical 'Recollections of a Poet's Childhood;' that she never executed that design affords little cause for regret, because, judging from works of the kind produced by other authors, it would seem to be absolutely impossible to recall, unaltered and in their pristine glow, the facts of one's mental history; the haze and fog of intervening time casting distorting shades upon the faded pictures, while fancy's pencil, in retouching, spoils them. A friend once showed the writer a landscape done by a clever artist, and asked, "What is it?" The question was perplexing, yet the instantaneous answer chanced to be correct: "It is Brecknockshire scenery with Devonshire colouring." Such incongruities are all present pictures of the past. The simplest and slightest contemporary remains far out-value all elaborated recollections; and such remains are, happily, preserved in the productions of Felicia Browne's childhood and early youth. She could not then analyse her feelings, but she could, and did, clearly manifest them; feelings evanescent as the varying lights of a spring morning, which no subsequent recol-

lection of associated incidents, actions, and projects could restore. As usual with children, her earliest writings were rather declaratory than descriptive or sentimental, and related chiefly to family occurrences, the things she saw, the books she read, and the public news she heard. Her eldest brother entered the army in the year 1806, and her second brother not long afterwards, for verses severally addressed to them mention that, within two years from that date, both were serving as subalterns in the 23rd regiment of foot, commonly called the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Hence, her military ardour was enkindled, and her sympathy awakened for the oppressed inhabitants of the Peninsula. A sonnet penned by her in a contemplative mood at the age of thirteen might readily be mistaken for one by Charlotte Smith in her prime. It begins—

"I love to hail the mild, the balmy hour."

She was the darling and pride of her own family, and all who knew her felt the attractive and attaching spell of her beauty and her genius. Her juvenile verses were justly deemed to give sure earnest of living poetry to come; and friends, in their fond partiality, believed that the multitudes of strangers called the public would indulgently trouble themselves to examine and admire a clever child's crude thoughts and correctly-worded exercises in French and English prosody. Two motives influenced the young authoress in consenting to their publication—the desire to obtain an open recognition of the talent for poetry which she consciously possessed, and the desire to assist the straitened income of her noble-minded mother; success in the former involving, to her sanguine expectation, the means of effecting her dutiful design. The poems, headed by some elegant introductory stanzas, ad-

dressed to the Viscountess Kirkwall, dated "Gwrych, October 1, 1807," were printed by subscription in a quarto volume, and published at Liverpool in 1808, with a dedication to the Prince of Wales, "by his Royal Highness's gracious permission"—a privilege betokening friends at court.

Although the contents of this volume had unquestionable merit as the production of a child, they chanced to provoke the harsh animadversions of a cynical reviewer, which so discouraged and distressed the young aspirant as to bring on an illness. From this, however, she soon recovered, and, with renewed zeal, returned to her beloved pursuits, and set about the preparation of a poem more ambitious in its aim and of greater length than any she had before attempted. Her strong family affections bore her mind away to every region trodden by those she loved; her perceptive power enabled her to inhale, as it were, all the congenial information they severally acquired; her indomitable energy impelled her to search out in books all necessary knowledge bearing on particular subjects; her vivid imagination gave form and colour, harmonious and poetic life, to all; and practice had now enabled her, in some degree, to mirror forth sentiments in apt words. Her 'England and Spain' is the first thing she wrote which can properly be termed a composition. The style imitates that of Campbell, in his 'Pleasures of Hope.' In graceful selection and command of language, melodious versification, historical knowledge, and full comprehension of her subject and its adjuncts; in delicacy of taste, and careful adherence to the example of the best standards of the period, this poem is worthy to be ranked with the most successful efforts of poets and poetesses at the age of fourteen. Nevertheless, a declamatory piece,

in which the principal dramatic personages consist of nations and abstract qualities, must, for want of more enduring connection with ordinary human sympathies, pass away with the occasion which called it forth. It was published immediately, excited great interest and admiration in England, and was translated into the Spanish language.

Having thus endeavoured to urge on the soldiers of her country to the rescue of an oppressed nation; while her mind was full of enthusiasm for Spain, its language, its literature, its chivalry and patriotism, and while, to her imagination, all the world glistened as a bright illusion, and human life as a romantic fiction, the young poetess first became acquainted with Captain Hemans, of the 4th regiment of foot, who was then on a visit in the neighbourhood. Struck with her extraordinary beauty, he fell passionately in love with her. He was handsome, well-bred, a soldier, about to embark for Spain to fight in the cause of freedom, and he was her declared lover. She was fifteen; her mind invested him with every heroic and amiable attribute, and her honest heart fervently returned his affection. The real incompatibility of their natures was plainly visible to the friends of both, who rejoiced at the speedy departure of Captain Hemans, trusting that the time which must of necessity elapse before he could return would serve to wear out such undesirable impressions. Constancy, however, is an heroic virtue, and danger an incentive to tender anxiety. Felicia Browne, therefore, was enabled in absence to etherealise and idolise her lover more and more. In the same year, 1809, Mrs. Browne and her family removed from Gwrych, about eight miles towards the south-eastward, to Bronwylfa, a pleasant country-house in the outskirts of the little city

of St. Asaph, in the county of Flint; where they enjoyed more frequent opportunities of entering into suitable society, without forfeiting the advantages of rural seclusion.

Mrs. Browne had friends at Conway, a town situated about ten miles from Gwrych, and on the same line of coast; and with them her daughter Felicia occasionally spent a few days in summer-time. None who have ever trod the spot need be reminded of its beauty, for the diversified loveliness of the scenery and accessories must haunt the beholder's sweetest dreams for many an after-year. There, with agile step and elastic frame, the joyous girl scaled the mountains, and joined in boating expeditions on the river or the straits. There, stimulated by lively companionship and the open air, her gay and playful spirits sometimes rose to overflowing vivacity; and on such a visit, probably, it was, that in a mirthful freak she used the gipsy fire which boiled the picnicking tea-kettle to set a-light the furze and heather on a rough hill-side. There her pencil found employment in sketching various landscapes, or depicting, from different points of view, the most majestic ruin which time ever mouldered out of a Norman fortress. Within the ivied walls of King Edward's castle she used to read and meditate for hours together, and the ancient native stronghold of Diganwy suggested to her mind, as its formidable rival had done in former years, some sweet memorial verses. The pearl-fishery in the river Conway had also a less direct influence upon many of her poems.

The two first stanzas of a poem which she addressed in 1811 to Edwards, the celebrated harper of Conway, are among the most spirited she ever wrote:—

"Minstrel! whose gifted hand can bring
Life, rapture, soul, from every string,

And wake, like bards of former time,
The spirit of the harp sublime;
Oh, still prolong the varying strain,
Oh, touch the enchanted chords again!
Thine is the charm suspending care,
The heavenly swell, the dying close,
The cadence melting into air,
That lulls each passion to repose:
While transport, lost in silence near,
Breathes all her language in a tear."

Public events connected with the military career of her elder brothers, books which she had read, family incidents, places she had seen, and considerations upon the sacred strength and value of home ties suggested by her own position and prospects, had led her to write many poems during the last few years; and early in 1812 she produced a small volume entitled 'The Domestic Affections, and Other Poems,' which was favourably received by the public. In this collection the stanzas addressed 'To my Mother' are redolent of grateful love and veneration: acknowledging boundless obligations to her for religious and intellectual training, she introduces the following lines, which, coming from the heart, and uttering an habitual feeling, unveil an important feature in the character of the poetess:—

"And oh, if e'er I sighed to claim
The palm, the living palm of fame,
The glowing wreath of praise;
If e'er I wished the glittering stores
That fortune on her favourite pours,
'Twas but that wealth and fame, if mine,
Round thee with streaming rays might shine,
And gild thy sun-bright days!"

Further tribute is rendered in the subsequent explanation, that she knew such advantages could only tend to the increase of her mother's happiness by enabling her widely to dispense

"The sunshine of beneficence."

In all the poems of this collection may be traced the rapid

increase of knowledge and of poetic power. One of them, 'The Ruin and its Flowers,' shows great command of lyric metre and of apposite and harmonious diction, a tasteful selection of suitable ideas, and facility in setting them forth in the light of her own mind; yet, blended with personal observation and native feeling are unmistakable reminiscences of Dr. Langhorne and Sir Walter Scott. 'The Domestic Affections' might pass for a poem by Samuel Rogers, and would do no discredit to his name. Among its dulcet sounds and correctly pictured scenes, her favourite idea of the dead revisiting their friends on earth is enunciated for the first time.

She read with extraordinary celerity, but with such concentrated attention, that she accurately imaged the contents of books in her mind, and could reproduce them at will, and repeat whole pages of poetry by heart which she had read but once. The rapid action and tenacious grasp of her memory were habitually as marvellous as in those vaunted instances where memory constitutes the only mental talent. On one occasion, at the request of an incredulous brother, she took up Heber's 'Europe,' a poem containing four hundred and twenty-four lines, which she had never seen before, and in the space of one hour and twenty minutes repeated the whole from beginning to end, "without a single mistake or a moment's hesitation."* On another occasion, which subsequently excited observation, she listened twice to Lord Byron's 'Stanzas to his Sister,' which were read aloud from a manuscript, and immediately repeated them and wrote them down.

To the Italian and French languages, which she had acquired in childhood, she now added the Spanish, Portuguese, and German, thus fixing her attention upon the

* 'Memoir,' p. 14.

precise meaning of words and the ideas which they convey, the varieties of national idiom, and the general nature and use of language as the exponent and vehicle of human thoughts and feelings. The natural attempt to find English equivalents for the contents of so many foreign vocabularies must have tended to enlarge her acquaintance with the verbal wealth of her own language, bringing often into active use valuable words and phrases, unknown and disregarded in the scanty prattle of modern society and the shallow stream of ordinary books. She doubtless often found, like many another thoughtful student, that duglott dictionaries are merely of elementary use, and that the meaning annexed in a foreign language to a foreign word is the true prompter of the answering native term. She did not acquire languages for conversational purposes, nor for the sake of display; her object simply was to gain access by their means to the treasures of their literature, and there to revel in the luxurious enjoyment of new and various imagery. Her talent for drawing was such as might have led to distinguished excellence in the art, had she given it sufficient time and care. Her love of music was a passion secondary only to her love of poetry. Her sister, whose musical genius, admirable execution, and fine taste rendered her a competent judge, says upon this subject:—"She played both the harp and piano with much feeling and expression, and at this time had a good voice. . . . . Even in her most joyous days the strains she preferred were always those of a pensive character. The most skilful combinations of abstract musical science did not interest or please her; what she loved best were national airs, whether martial or melancholy, amongst these the Welsh and Spanish were her favourites; and whatever might be called suggestive music, as awakening

associations either traditional, local, or imaginary. There are ears in which certain melodies are completely identified with the recollection of her peculiarly soft and *sostenuto* touch, which gave to the piano an effect almost approaching to the swell of an organ." *

The whole compass of polite literature and most of the fine arts might be reckoned among her pursuits, but the essential attar she distilled from all was poetry. Her conversation was as rich in worth as it was brilliant and delightful; the Persian texture shone in unrolling, but it was never unrolled for the sake of shining. Her personal appearance was highly attractive; she was of middle stature and slight in figure; her complexion was exquisitely fair, clear, and bright; her silky and luxuriant hair was in colour of a rich golden brown; her fine eyes were radiant with genius, and every point about her was touched with elegance. Her air was graceful, and her manner fascinating in its artlessness.

To those persons who wonder that a woman, brought up in poverty and in rural seclusion, could come forth, not only well read and highly accomplished, but likewise exquisitely refined and graceful both in mind and manners, it may suffice to recommend a due consideration of her natural tendencies, the home influences to which she was early subjected, the occasional intercourse with high bred people which afforded opportunities of assimilation, the ennobling effect of sublime and beautiful nature, and the habits of the surrounding peasantry. Although very young when first transplanted, she was old enough to be struck with the change of scene; and the greatness and loveliness of the Cambrian mountains and valleys attracted her attention more forcibly than if she had been born in the midst

* 'Memoir,' pp. 14, 15.

of them. No nation ever exceeded the Cymry in the constant and uniform appreciation of good manners. With them politeness has never been the mere formal habit of a tutored class, but always the natural emanation of a generous, affable, and gentle spirit pervading the whole people. High bred strangers, when visiting the Principality, never fail to remark with admiration the courteous and graceful demeanour of the Welsh peasantry. The poems of Churchyard, the descriptions of Giraldus, the notices of Bede, and the records of Roman writers, bear witness through a period of nearly two thousand years to this dignified and distinctive characteristic of the Cymry. Their own triads at once inculcate and appeal to "the noble courtesy of the Cymric nation," and the oldest national writings extant breathe the same gracious and engaging spirit. The remarkable strength and tenderness of their family attachments may doubtless be attributed in some degree to this general observance of social civilities. The old Welsh churches, their picturesque sites, their vernacular services, and the memorial flowers and shrubs strewn and planted upon graves deeply impressed her; the religious habits of the people, their kind-heartedness and liberal hospitality, secured her affection, while their music, their poetry, their harpers, their bards, and the old traditions of their race, poured like rills from the mountains into her soul, supplying well-springs to a fountain.

Both by nature and habit she was fitted rather for contemplative than for active life. Her first desire was self-improvement, and next to that the desire to promote the happiness of her home circle occupied her heart; while to the dearest members of that circle she looked for immunity from household cares, and for protection from an unknown and dreaded outer world. She was in truth "a composition

of 'the best and honourablest things," and fain would have grown into an angel to exemplify her theoretic notions of exalted virtue and religious sentiment; not such an angel as had the charge of baking cakes for Elijah, but one to direct national destinies or to harp and sing anthems, and proclaim peace on earth and good will to men. Not yet had she learned experimentally that doing the will of God is exaltation, be the service what it may.

Such was Felicia Browne in 1812, when, at the age of eighteen, she became the wife of Captain Alfred Hemans, who had returned from the Spanish war and the Walcheren expedition an exacting valetudinarian. By this marriage he meant to appropriate the heart and hand of a lovely and clever woman to administer henceforth exclusively to his comfort and satisfaction; and she gave herself, heart and soul, to a husband who was to be for life her chivalrous lover, to admire and pet her as her fond brothers did, and to delight and glory in her like her sister and her mother, her transcendant expectations ignoring a mediocrity of happiness.

Captain Hemans had been appointed adjutant of the Northamptonshire Militia, and the first year of her married life was consequently spent with him at Daventry. The Watling-street, a Roman camp, and the old mansion-house and church in Fawsley-park, were the only outward objects of local interest, and Mrs. Hemans mournfully felt the change from her mother's home in a long-loved mountain-land to a dwelling-place among strangers on a scantily watered table-land in a midland county. Contrary to expectation, the regiment was soon disbanded, and Captain Hemans, being unemployed, returned with his wife and their firstborn son to Bronwylfa, where they took up their abode under the roof of Mrs. Browne. With devoted

affection, Mrs. Hemans fulfilled a mother's duties, pursuing simultaneously and with unabated assiduity her literary avocations, acquiring a knowledge of the Latin language, and improving her mind by the study of the best authors. Her amiable sister has remarked * upon the immethodical way in which Mrs. Hemans used to surround herself with books in different languages and on different subjects, while, nevertheless, the various stores of knowledge they supplied found clear and orderly arrangement in her mind. Probably, if the observer had shared those studies, the mystery would have been solved by the fact, that through many different books the poetess was either pursuing and collecting the scattered parts of one series of ideas or tracing out parallels. Many volumes of extracts and transcribed passages show how industriously she worked during this period.

Neither the 'Memoir,' the 'Memorials,' nor any other biographical notices which the present writer has been able to consult, give the precise dates of the next series of publications, nor can those dates be always correctly inferred from internal evidence or incidental circumstances. Lacking the opportunity of searching out the first editions, she has therefore endeavoured to approximate as closely as possible to a chronological arrangement, principally under the guidance of 'The Works,' in seven volumes.†

In 1816 Mrs. Hemans published 'The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy.' In this poem her style is calm, dignified, symmetrical, and polished as the Grecian sculpture which forms its theme. No juvenile crudities or discrepancies disfigure the composition; knowledge, taste, and talent imbue every line, and towards the close a courageous outburst of genuine eloquence announces the yet higher objects of Christian art.

* 'Memoir,' pp. 26, 27. † 'Blackwood's Edinburgh,' 1857.

A brief note to page 26 of the 'Memoir' mentions that "some time before" the marriage of Mrs. Hemans her father had "again engaged in mercantile pursuits, and gone out to Quebec, where he died." No mention is made of the time when her youngest brother Claude went to Canada, nor of the time when her sister left home to reside and travel with a friendly peeress.

'Modern Greece' was her next production. It bears more distinctly than any of her former ones the stamp of originality; the collected ore has been thoroughly fused in her own crucible, and she has coined it, instead of merely polishing and stringing into ornaments the pieces she had found. Genius, guided by exquisite taste, is the unquestionable characteristic of this beautiful poem. Though breathing over the heroic remembrances of Greece, the entrancement of luxurious scenery in her descriptions, and of delightful music in her versification, she is never so far carried away by the appropriate sentiment of the subject as to interrupt the clear stream of truthful thought, which flows below the overshadowing imagery and now and then flashes out. The manner in which she has envisaged the modern scene, traced its most striking features, recalled departed times, and thrown the pure light of her fine imagination over all, incites in the reader an emotion of glowing acknowledgment that the poetess is worthy of her theme. The concluding stanzas are unsatisfactory, because they predict for Britain an Athenian excellence in art for which her nature, akin to that of Rome, has proved from generation to generation unfit; and because, looking forward to Britain's final traces upon earth, they foreshow mere material and sculptural remains, instead of moral and spiritual monuments.

The 'Miscellaneous Poems,' beginning with 'Lines written in a Hermitage,' and ending with 'Stanzas on

the Death of the Princess Charlotte,' written Nov. 23, 1817, seem to have been partly fugitives collected from magazines, and some other pieces which assisted in filling up the volume of 'Translations from Camoens,' &c. 'Evening among the Alps' is an example of Mrs. Hemans's power of realising and describing an unseen landscape. The 'Dirge of a Child' is plaintive; the 'Monody on the Princess,' pathetic. The other poems are pleasing, but not of durable texture.

In 1818 she published her 'Translations from Camoens and Other Poets,' which astonished the 'Quarterly Review' by the extensive acquaintance with languages and books of which they bear evidence. The elegant facility of their execution is also admirable. The 'Basvigliana' of Monti exhibits no peculiar excellence of rendering. The passages from the 'Caius Gracchus' of the same poet were not in themselves worthy of her pen. The scenes from the 'Alcestis' of Alfieri are pathetic, though the style forms in its plainness a strong contrast to her natural floweriness, and, either unintentionally or intentionally, memory has led her to imitate the diction and cadence of Potter in his translation of the 'Alcestis' of Euripides. Anything awkward or ungrammatical from Mrs. Hemans is so rare and extraordinary, that a combination of two such anomalies must not pass unnoticed in this translation from Alfieri:—

> "The prey
> Is ready, nor is wholly worthless him
> For whom 'tis freely offered."

The scenes from the 'Carmagnola' of Manzoni are finely done, and the critical remarks interspersed do credit to her discriminating judgment. The 'Patriotic Effusions of the Italian Poets,' and the remarks which introduce them, are not above mediocrity, though a few very graceful lines vindicate the choice and the skill of Mrs. Hemans.

In the year 1818 Captain Hemans, without any preconcerted plan of separation, left his wife and children at Bronwylfa and went to Rome, continuing to correspond with her occasionally when she consulted him concerning the education and welfare of their children—five sons, whose care and charge devolved on her.

That Hunterian dissector of human nature, John Foster, towards the close of the First Letter in his 'Essay on the Application of the Epithet Romantic,' seems almost to have foreshadowed Mrs. Hemans and her husband, when, drawing a strong contrast between that splendid predominance of the imaginative faculty which precedes a generous and active expansion of the feelings, and prepares the mind for Divine faith, and that cold, methodical intelligence resembling the ramification of trees in winter, "destitute of all the green soft luxury of foliage," he adds:—"The affections which may exist in such minds seem to have a bleak abode, somewhat like those bare deserted nests which you have often seen in such trees." * Henceforth, her children became her first objects in life. To promote their happiness, to cultivate their affections, to form their moral and intellectual characters, and to procure for them every possible advantage, was the object of her incessant care and indefatigable labour.

In 1818 a member of the Highland Society offered prizes for the three best poems on the subject of Wallace's Invocation to Bruce on the banks of the Carron. With little expectation of success against multitudinous competitors, Mrs. Hemans complied with the request of a zealous friend in Edinburgh, and sent in a poem which obtained the principal prize (50*l.*), and was published in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for September, 1819. It is written in rhymed octosyllabic couplets, like the poetical

* Edition, 1835, p. 185.

romances of Sir Walter Scott, and imitates their general style with feminine elegance. Its landscapes, however, are vague, its personages shadowy, and the conclusion is the only energetic part of the composition.

The 'Tales and Historic Scenes' were published in 1819. 'The Abencerrage,' which stands first in the volume, contains some fine descriptive passages. 'The Widow of Crescentius' embodies a great deal of historical knowledge. 'The Last Banquet of Antony and Cleopatra' resembles an Oxford prize poem. 'Alaric in Italy' treats of the entrance of the conquering Goths into the Imperial City of Rome, and of the burial of Alaric in the bed of the river Busentinus, events which exercise peculiar power over all imaginative students, and are briefly and forcibly set forth by Mrs. Hemans. 'The Wife of Asdrubal' is less complete and less vivid in narration than the passage of ancient history from which it is versified. 'Heliodorus in the Temple' is prettily paraphrased from the Second Book of the Maccabees, without acquiring in the process any additional power of affecting the reader's mind. The 'Night Scene in Genoa' is so strikingly described by Sismondi, that it loses instead of gaining by being turned into verse, where, but for the extract prefixed, it would appear so indistinct and incomplete as to be scarcely assignable to its place in history. There are, nevertheless, a few good lines in this poem. That of 'The Troubadour and Richard Cœur de Lion' gives the old tradition, and is chiefly remarkable for that most unwonted thing, a harsh and dissonant verse from the lyre of Mrs. Hemans. In the Troubadour's Song four consecutive lines end with the sound of *t*, perhaps by way of experiment:—

"The hour is come, the stake is set,
The Soldan cried to the captive knight,
And the sons of the prophet in throngs are met,
To gaze on the fearful sight."

Among the twisted

"Chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony,"

the various endings of lines termed by French grammarians "rimes masculines et rimes feminines," and used in alternate couplets, though not prescribed by the rules of English prosody, are often advantageously applied by English poets. Their use in the stanza of four lines was also well known to Mrs. Hemans, and the above quotation is a solitary instance of counteraction to their smoothness. 'The Fate of Conradin,' the last of the series, apart from Sismondi's narrative, reads well, though it proves insipid in its presence. All the historical incidents here selected for paraphrase by Mrs. Hemans are noble and affecting, but unfortunately they are usually extracted from pages too eloquent to leave the poet any reasonable hope of rivalling their force or enhancing their effect. They were, nevertheless, well received by the public, who had not yet learned, from the superior excellence of her subsequent productions, to be fastidious in their judgment.

In 1819, a year of extraordinary mental fertility, she also wrote 'The Sceptic,' a didactic poem, in which her kind and almost paternal friend and counsellor, Dr. Luxmore, Bishop of St. Asaph, took peculiar interest. It was published in 1820, and received by the principal public critics not merely with approbation, but with respectful admiration. The language is rich and copious, without being ornate or redundant; the treatment of the subject is clear and forcible, full of feminine delicacy, and of earnest and tender feeling. The Sceptic is assumed to be one who has perversely chosen infidelity, and the Christian faith is persuasively urged on his acceptance on the sole plea of its being the only effectual remedy for the maladies, necessities, and sorrows of the human heart, the only true

source of human hope in life and in death. One of the similies introduced is original, true, and very beautiful:—

"Hush, fond enthusiast! still, obscure, and lone,
Yet not less terrible because unknown,
Is the last hour of thousands: they retire
From life's thronged paths unnoticed to expire;
As the light leaf, whose fall to ruin bears
Some trembling insect's little world of cares,
Descends in silence, while around waves on
The mighty forest, reckless what is gone,
Such is man's doom, and ere an hour be flown,
Start not thou trifler! such may be thine own!"

The paragraph which describes village devotion is likewise beautiful, and so is the concluding one of the poem, which describes a mother training her child for heaven, just as she herself had been trained, and was then endeavouring to train her sons.

On the 29th of January, 1820, died King George III., and shortly afterwards Mrs. Hemans wrote and published a Monody on the occasion, replete with woman's own poetry, affectionate and holy memories, softest and sweetest reflections and feelings, all breathed in flute-like strains of all extenuating and heart-soothing eloquence.

In the year 1820, Mrs. Hemans became an occasional contributor to 'The Edinburgh Monthly Magazine,' then edited by the Rev. Robert Morehead. About the same period she entered into an arrangement with Mr. John Parry, Bardd Alaw, to write English words to his selection of Welsh Melodies.

Reginald Heber, rector of Hodnet, who had married, in the year 1809, the youngest daughter of Dr. Shipley, dean of St. Asaph, was in the habit of staying frequently at Bôdryddan, with his father-in-law, and, in the spring of 1820, became personally acquainted with Mrs. Hemans, whose genius and acquirements excited his liveliest interest, and whose ingenuous and noble character secured

his friendship. Looking up to him with delighted admiration, experiencing from his conversation a joy akin to that of first perusing a new and original book, and encouraged by his benignity, she freely imparted to him her literary projects, and showed him the manuscripts upon which she was working. On her poem, entitled 'Superstition and Revelation,' he drew up a paper of suggestions, proposing the interpolation between the existing stanzas, of many others illustrating more at large the various forms of idolatry in the ancient Gentile world, and a supplementary close, narrating the return of the Jews to Palestine; proposing also the construction of two additional cantoes; the second to close with the fall of Pagan Rome; and the third and last with an anticipation of the complete triumph of Christianity. Thus amplified, the magnitude of the undertaking seems to have overawed her mind, and deterred her from making any further efforts for its completion. The poem was laid aside for many years, and at last posthumously published as a fragment. The stanza in which it is composed is that most musical, flexible, and expressive of Italian measures used by Spenser in his 'Muiopotmos.' The interest felt by Heber sufficiently attests the intrinsic merits of 'Superstition and Revelation.'

In October, 1820, Mrs. Hemans paid a visit of some weeks to her friends at Wavertree Lodge, near Liverpool, the seat of Mr. Henry Park. Writing from thence, she says, in a letter to her sister:—"I cannot tell you how much I have enjoyed the novelty of all the objects about me. The pastoral seclusion and tranquillity of the life I have led for the last seven or eight years, had left my mind in that state of blissful ignorance particularly calculated to render every new impression an agreeable one, and accordingly, gas-lights, steamboats, Mr. Kean, casts

from the Elgin Marbles, and tropical plants in the Botanic Garden, have all, in turn, been the objects of my wondering admiration. I saw Kean in two characters, Richard III. and Othello, and can truly say, I felt as if I had never understood Shakspeare till then. I shall never forget the sort of electric light which seemed to flash across my mind from the bursts of power he displayed in several of my favourite passages." * Referring afterwards, in conversation, to Mr. Kean, she said, still more succinctly and cleverly, that "seeing him act was like reading Shakspeare by flashes of lightning." †

The Royal Society of Literature having offered a prize for the best poem on the subject of Dartmoor, Mrs. Hemans was encouraged to compete for it; and in June, 1821, the prize was awarded to her. Besides the gratification, the reputation, and the gain of this victory, it also afforded her the pleasure of making a new friend in Dr. Croly, the secretary, whose interest in her was strongly excited by the perusal of the poem. 'Dartmoor' well deserved its guerdon. It exhibits a correct knowledge of the local antiquities, and an orderly arrangement of the scanty materials; for, instead of wandering there at her own sweet will, up and down, hither and thither in the subject, she follows a prescribed path with methodical exactness. It is brightened with several good similies, and many separate lines might be quoted not less terse and full of meaning than the concise utterances of Pope himself. The fault lies in the vacancy left between the days of the Druids and the days of Napoleon the Corsican. Historical events might have been found to occupy a part of that wide empty space; and even an account of Dartmoor's use as hunting-ground, and a place

* 'Memoir,' p. 42. † 'Memorials,' vol. i., p. 76.

of Gipsey encampments, would have been better than nothing.

Deeming herself a naturalised Welshwoman, Mrs. Hemans felt much gratified by being elected, in 1821, an honorary member of the Royal Cambrian Institution, in acknowledgment of the services she was rendering to the Principality, by studying its history and writing words to the national melodies.

In 1821, Mrs. Hemans and all her warm-hearted family, experienced a severe affliction in the death of her brother, Claude-Scott Browne, the play-fellow, one year younger than herself, to whom many of her earliest verses were addressed. He died while acting as Deputy-Assistant-Commissary-General at Kingstown, in Upper Canada.

In the course of the same year, the return from Vienna of her sister, overflowing with admiration for the artists, poets, and moral philosophers of Germany, and laden with presents for her of German books from their eldest brother, Sir Henry, proved the means of enkindling in Mrs. Hemans a Teutonic enthusiasm, which for many subsequent years powerfully influenced her studies and her compositions, producing among many immediate and obvious good effects, some counteractive ones, which, perhaps, when trouble came, did not conduce to health of heart.

For the Eisteddfod, or meeting of Welsh Bards, held in London on the 22nd of May, 1822, Mrs. Hemans composed a poetical address worthy of herself and of the subject. Every line of it is spirited and appropriate, and one passage more especially exemplifies the eloquence which it eulogizes:—

"Well might their lays be lofty; soaring thought
From nature's presence tenfold grandeur caught:

Well might bold freedom's soul pervade the strains
Which startled eagles from their lone domains,
And like a breeze in chainless triumph went
Up through the blue resounding firmament.
Whence came the echoes to those numbers high?
'Twas from the battle-fields of days gone by,
And from the tombs of heroes laid to rest
With their good swords upon the mountain's breast;
And from the watch-towers on the heights of snow
Severed by cloud and storm from all below;
And the turf-mounds, once girt by ruddy spears,
And the rock-altars of departed years.
Thence, deeply mingling with the torrent's roar,
The winds a thousand wild responses bore;
And the green land whose every vale and glen
Doth shrine the memory of heroic men,
On all her hills awakening to rejoice,
Sent forth proud answers to her children's voice."

About this period, the eldest brother of Mrs. Hemans having purchased Bronwylfa and other property in the neighbourhood, had the house enlarged and improved; and without displacing his mother and her family, came with his young wife, his warlike spoils and trophies won in a score of battles in various parts of the globe, and all his military and knightly honours and reminiscences, to enjoy a veteran's rest beneath the same roof.

In 1822, Mr. John Parry, Bardd Alaw, published the first volume of his 'Welsh Melodies,' with English words by Mrs. Hemans.* Her 'Harp of Wales' is sweetly plaintive, and manifests a mild enthusiasm which serves as a popular substitute for the sterner pathos of the true bardic "awen." In the 'Druid Chorus, on the Landing of the Romans,' suavity and elegance mar the force of denunciation. In 'The Green Isles of Ocean' her gentle and melodious spirit finds congenial exercise. 'The Sea-song of Gafran' enters well into the imaginary position of the singers voyaging on the deep to seek the island homes of

* See the 'Literary Remains of the Rev. Thomas Price, Carnhuanawc, with a Memoir of his Life,' by Jane Williams, vol. ii., chap. xxv., p. 401.

the souls of their departed priests; and to the ear it is most musical even without its accompaniment. 'The Hîrlas Horn' gives an abridged and refined version of the old Welsh 'Hîrlas' of Owen Cyfeiliog. Of 'The Hall of Cynddylan,' the versification alone is new: Owen's translation of the Heroic Elegy of Llywarch Hên, most honestly printed in the margin, suggests every idea which the song contains. 'The Lament of Llywarch Hên,' derived through the same medium from the same native source, suits exactly the elegiac turn of Mrs. Hemans's mind, which enables her to give a true though diffuse version of this pathetic and beautiful poem. 'Gruffydd's Feast' is imitated from the Welsh. 'The Cambrian in America' breathes all an exile's tender feeling for his native land. 'The Fair Isle' catches happily the spirit of the air to which it was written. 'Taliesin's Prophecy' is paraphrased with great dignity, and 'Owen Glyndwr's War-song' also gives a true though softened echo of the old bardic strain. 'Prince Madoc's Farewell' is appropriate, and so is 'Caswallon's Triumph.' 'Howel's Song' might, with advantage, have retained more of Howel's own thoughts. The song entitled 'The Mountain Fires,' is very pretty and picturesque. 'Eryri Wen' is spoiled by the use of one unsuitable epithet, that of "monarch hill;" applying to the highest of the Welsh mountains a term strictly limited by the people to an inferior class of heights; the Cymric use of words being so precisely assigned and graduated, that not only mountains, hills, and mounds have their several appellations, but the different forms and attributes belonging to each variety of each kind is specifically indicated by the name. 'The Chant of the Bards, before their Massacre by King Edward I.,' is an insipid celebration of a figment, and 'The Dying Bard's Prophecy'

is little better. 'The Rock of Cader Idris' is wonderfully fine. Poets, or persons who can feel what is poetical in nature, who have climbed the precipitous steeps, and stood on the summit of this magnificent mountain, amid the whirl of encompassing mists, to watch the glorious appearing of sun-rise, will duly appreciate this poem, the last and the best of a series praiseworthy alike for correct knowledge of the national history and character, for perfect accordance with the melodies to which they were written, and for being, in every various inflection of their verse, most musical. They formed the basis of her high reputation as a song-writer, and widened the scope of her influence in the world.

In the year 1823, Mrs. Hemans became a contributor to 'The New Monthly Magazine,' which was then edited by Campbell, the poet. In the summer of the same year she published 'The Siege of Valencia, and other Poems.' In this drama Mrs. Hemans ventures not only upon the construction of a plot, but also upon the invention of imaginary personages, and the selection of their sphere of action. The opening ballad is too long; the secret grief of Zimena for her lover's death might have been better told in half the number of words. The second scene is also too long; the latter part of it consists of a dialogue between Elmina the heroine and Hernandez a priest, and is distinguished by passages of high poetic merit, and by an ill-managed division and counteraction of scenic interest. No one who has either felt or witnessed the emotion of passionate anxiety can be ignorant that a past and narrated sorrow offers a cold, repelling, and abhorrent contrast to the active, concentrated, and absorbing presence of such agony. Yet here the mind of Elmina, bent on one purpose, full of devices for its accomplishment, seeing and feeling nothing

but the peril of her children, and the necessity of averting it, is unnaturally interrupted in its course by a tedious and vain attempt to divide the reader's sympathy with the old griefs of a fierce ecclesiastic. Subsiding emotion may be soothed by narratives of kindred trouble, but, on the full-swelling tide of effort, in the face of a dire and instantly impending calamity, the dreary frost of such delay is intolerable, and Elmina's patience under it preternatural.

All the characters of this piece are well conceived and well sustained. In that of Elmina, Mrs. Hemans seems to have embodied her idea of how she herself would have felt and acted under similar trials: there is in it such an intensity of life and love, such majesty, such tenderness, such sad reality, that the most vivid imagination must have failed in creating it without the concurrent wear and tear of a fervid heart. The terrible conflict of Elmina between maternal instinct on one side and conjugal love with chivalrous honour on the other, her temporary subjection to evil, her conscious loss of moral dignity under the crushing pressure of temptation, her vacillation, her repentant recognition of the purpose of affliction, her faith and heroic constancy when all is lost, forms one of the finest word-pictures ever drawn by a woman's hand. For such originality the penalty must have been previously paid in tears.

The most remarkable of the 'Other Poems' in the same volume are 'The Voice of Spring,' by which she inaugurated at once into public favour a form of lyric composition peculiarly her own, and the fine national ode, entitled 'England's Dead.'

'A Tale of the Secret Tribunal' has more freedom in its flow, more vividness in its descriptions, and more animation in its personages than her ordinary narratives.

Touches of deep feeling, evidently drawn from personal experience, and an augmenting sense of mental power may also be reckoned among its characteristics. The story runs no rival race with able historic statements, and consequently challenges no disparaging comparison. The introductory scene, and that of the father and daughter in the forest are very fine. The religious expositions are cloudy, and the style imitates, sometimes too closely, the rhymed romances of Sir Walter Scott. This poem was not published until after the death of the authoress.

'The Caravan in the Deserts' is a specimen of the appropriating facility with which Mrs. Hemans caught from the records of travellers the most salient features and attributes of countries she had never seen, expatiated on the loveliness of the lovely with luxuriating delight, and threw over the horrors of the arid desert's glare a soft and shadowy fascination. 'Hers is to scenes of terror a sort of angel-guidance; harmony, light, and beauty float around it. 'Marius among the Ruins of Carthage' is full of graceful, though not vigorous, poetry. The 'Song founded on an Arabian Anecdote,' and the translation of Tiek's 'Alp-horn Song' are scarcely worthy of her.

The translations from Horace transfuse so happily the exact ideas and the concise elegance of the originals that few English versions will bear to be compared with them. The third verse of the 'Ode to Dellius' is wonderfully-well done:—

"Qua pinus ingens albaque populus
Umbram hospitalem consociare amant
Ramis et obliquo laborat
Lympha fugax trepidare rivo."

"Haunts where the silvery poplar boughs
Love with the pine's to blend on high,
And some clear fountain brightly flows
In graceful windings by."

'The Cross of the South' and 'The Sleeper on Marathon' are but elegant and harmonious versifications of commonplace ideas. The verses on several occasions to Miss F. A. L. are replete with sweetness and friendly sympathy; and the last set, to the same, 'On the Death of her Mother,' are likewise remarkable for elegiac tenderness and distinctive suitability.

The translations from Garcilasso de la Vega, from Sannazaro, and from Camoens, have no great merit. 'The Maremma' is languid even to tediousness. 'A Tale of the Fourteenth Century' is rather a reverie than a composition; the exordium melodious as if made to music, graphic as if drawn from sight, indicates a fine imagination in placid exercise: but in the story, order, conciseness, and strength, being utterly wanting, no occasional excellence of description or sentiment can be accepted as an adequate compensation for the lax and incoherent state of the poetic materials.

'The Last Constantine' is a rare combination of grandeur and pathos, beauty and melody. If the concentrated martial energy of the iron empire's last expiring throes be feebly represented in this poem, yet is it something more than a mere woman's ordinary funeral song, resembling rather—

> "An angel watcher's long and sad farewell,
> The requiem of a faith's departing sway,
> A throne, a nation's dirge, a wail for earth's decay."

The 'Greek Songs,' 'Elysium,' 'The Funeral Genius,' 'The Tombs of Platææ,' and 'The View from Castri,' are all of them elaborately elegant and essentially Greek in the pictures they present, the fallen glories they deplore, and the freedom they eulogize; but they do not equal many of her other compositions on similar subjects.

'The Festal Hour' is a fine though anomalous composition, catching the spirit of olden times and widely-distant lands, and applying the lesson drawn from thence in a tone too pompous for the ears of modern revellers. 'The Battle of Morganten,' as its name tells, is a mere paraphrase of a passage from Planta's 'History of the Helvetic Confederacy;' the scenery and decorations are, however, very good, and the recital is unusually animated.

'Sebastian of Portugal, a Dramatic Fragment,' is a story told in excellent blank verse, and with the accompaniment of such sweet poetry, five, or at least three acts might have been read complacently, although from the very first opening little hope can be cherished of proper development. The King and his nominally-wise counsellor Gonzalez return to Lisbon from long captivity in Africa, apparently without any notion of the events which have taken place during their absence, or any consequent plan of future conduct. Events drift slowly, like scattered waifs and strays on still waters touched only by the casual wind, and at the close of the fourth scene, the whole drama comes to an untimely end, dying out from mere inanity.

The 'Ode on the Death of King Sebastian of Portugal and his Army in Africa,' a translation from Herrera, was probably the unlucky provocative of the foregoing attempt at a tragedy.

In the spring of the year 1823, Mrs. Hemans contributed 'Belshazzar's Feast,'—as good a poem on the subject as could probably have been produced by any modern poet—to a 'Collection of Poems from Living Authors,' projected and edited by Joanna Baillie for a charitable purpose. In a curtailed form, this paraphrase was reprinted with the 'Siege of Valencia.' The 'Songs of the Cid' belong like-

wise to this period, and were first published with the poems above enumerated. They have caught the true spirit of Spanish chivalry, and are perfect in their kind. The 'Lines on a Flower from the Field of Grutli,' and 'On a Leaf from the Tomb of Virgil,' and 'The Chieftain's Song' are fine. 'The League of the Alps' is poetically told.

Having shown the manuscript of her tragedy, finally known as 'The Vespers of Palermo,' to the rector of Hodnet, she was led, in deference to his opinion and to that of Dean Milman, to curtail, modify, and finish it with a view to representation on the stage. On the 22nd of April, 1823, Reginald Heber took his final leave of Hodnet, and, having been consecrated Bishop of Calcutta, embarked on the 16th of the following June for India, to enter upon a course of arduous duties with almost apostolic zeal. Dean Milman took charge of the tragedy, and, after many difficulties and delays, procured its acceptance at Covent Garden Theatre, where Mr. Charles Kemble and his tragic staff unanimously agreed in expecting a favourable reception for it; Mr. Murray, the publisher, gave her two hundred guineas for the copyright, and the harassing fluctuations of hope and fear attendant on the stimulated ambition of public triumph and the dreaded alternative of public contempt, subsiding under the assurances of competent advisers, had almost sunk to complacent rest, when, on the night of the 12th of December, 1823, the tragedy of 'The Vespers of Palermo' was produced, sustained by the ablest efforts of Charles Kemble and Mr. Young, with an effect so neutralised by the bad acting and ridiculous intonation of Miss Kelly, that the performance virtually amounted to a complete failure.

This tragedy is full of true poetry; every line is in musical cadence, every sentence of half-a-dozen lines contains some fine sentiment or beautiful description, many of the situations are striking, the plot is well arranged and well developed, and there is no conspicuous fault excepting a redundant wealth of diction.

The death of Sir Henry Browne's young wife overshadowed both himself and his family with sorrow. Mrs. Hemans mourned her with a soft and tender melancholy, and, having then for the first time looked on death, gained from the sad occasion one of time's most impressive lessons. The 'Dirge,' in the third volume of the 'Works,' breathes the wail of real feeling:—

"For there is hushed on earth
A voice of gladness: there is veiled a face,
Whose parting leaves a dark and silent place,
By the once joyous hearth.
A smile hath passed, which filled its home with light,
A soul whose beauty made that smile so bright."

Through the zealous intervention of Joanna Baillie, Sir Walter Scott, and other true friends of fair play and genuine poetry, the tragedy of 'The Vespers of Palermo' was brought upon the Edinburgh stage, on the night of the 5th of April, 1824. The principal characters were performed by Vandenhoff, Calcraft, and Mrs. Henry Siddons, and the success of the piece was decidedly good.

About this time Mrs. Hemans, anxious to put in practice the lessons she had derived alike from the strictures of friendly and unfriendly commentators, occupied herself in writing the tragedy of 'De Chatillon, or the Crusaders.' The fair copy having been unfortunately lost, lent perhaps to some one who never returned it, this clever and well-wrought drama, after lying for many years in obscurity, had at last the disadvantage of being posthumously printed

from a transcript of the original rough draft. In this tragedy occurs the song of 'The Captive Knight.' The words Dr. Johnson might have praised, for their clear and noble simplicity, as he did those of Monk Lewis's 'Alonzo and Imogen;' and, in combination with the accompaniment composed by her sister, the song well deserves the commendation of Sir Walter Scott, and the yet higher praise implied by the fact of his never being weary of listening to it.

To run to her mother with all the praises she received was always her first impulse, and, in every instance of achieved success, to communicate the joy-diffusing tidings to every member of the family, verbally if at hand, and by letter if absent, was a necessary preliminary to her recognition of personal gratification in the fact. Until the intelligence had gladdened all the hearts that were dearest to her, she could neither feel its worth nor stop to rejoice in it. After winning, year by year, fresh guerdons of applause for purity of thought, elegance of diction, and melody of verse, to be told emphatically and unanimously by the ablest critics in the land, that she had written excellently well, shaped, for her original mode of apprehending the analogies of natural objects with human feelings, an original style of lyric utterance, and taken a tenacious hold upon the popular heart, could not but touch her very deeply; such testimony being made visible, and tangible, and audible, not merely in the cold formality of print but in the tearful smiles of beloved faces, in the friendly eyes, and hands, and tones of pilgrim-visitors, in multitudes of eulogistic letters, and in the general tribute of deference and admiration accorded to her very name, she could not but feel soothed, and pleased, and encouraged, thankful, and almost happy. It was rather the

voices than the strain which gained over her this grief-assuaging and care-suspending charm, and the force of this charm was now augmented by the lively and earnest interest testified by her children in all she wrote, and in all that friends and critics at home and abroad said of all that she had written. When a prize was won, her exultation acquired buoyancy from theirs; when an expected award was withheld, the bitterness of disappointment lay in their baffled confidence; and when the sanguine anticipations vainly guaranteed by a Heber, a Milman, and a Kemble had failed, the stinging pang of her mortification lay in the children's knowledge of her failure, in the children's knowledge that the scribblers of the daily newspapers, basely deeming success and ill-success to be synonyms of merit and demerit, had ridiculed a work of genius which men of genius had extolled. One of the most touching and characteristic anecdotes in her 'Memoir' is that which relates her bravely going to the bedsides of her boys, who were all lying awake waiting for a triumph, to tell them the bad news; and, doubtless, the chief joy of recovery from this discomfiture consisted in the renewal of their trust.

To be a heroine to her sons was a form of ambition well suited to her character, and from the time when it first arose in her heart the great world seemed like a camera projecting its diminished shadows pictorially upon her hearth, and among them she watched with anxiety the reflected image of herself thus cast before eyes whose approval to her was the gladness of fame.

The faculty of fancy, as contradistinguished from that of imagination, alike by inherent qualities and by the sphere of action, was possessed by Mrs. Hemans in all its bright acuteness, and kept well furbished by constant use. She never showed it to the public: the public found no

raillery, no drollery, no comical allusion in her poetry, and dreamed not that she could in social life adroitly handle the foils and battledores of wit, flashing out sparkling brilliancy, and keeping up buoyant emulation. Yet her conversation and her letters, flowing with the tide of circumstance, often tossed its varied matter with all the wayward and grotesque whimsicality of an irresistibly mirth-stirring humourist.

Catching the spirit of the social, and more especially of the domestic hour, or under an hilarious impulse, she would, for the momentary entertainment of her companions, do even more than talk "delicious nonsense," she would write whole sheets of ludicrous verses, full of learning and ingenuity, and redolent of real fun, never caring for their preservation when once they had fulfilled their transient purpose.

Many minds abundantly endowed with fancy are destitute of imagination in its highest and Wordsworthian sense, but few which possess the higher faculty are without the lower, though the poetical philosopher of Rydal Mount falls himself among the notable exceptions to this rule. While her own powers of wit and satire were repressed by Mrs. Hemans as unworthy of a place among grave and noble mental exercises, they undoubtedly retained a very extensive and beneficial influence over the discipline of her taste, and prevented elegance and refinement from ever approaching the borders of sentimental and fastidious absurdity.

In the summer of the year 1824, she first placed her eldest boy, Arthur, at a boarding-school at Bangor. On this occasion she accompanied him herself to the master's house, and subsequently spent several weeks with friends in the neighbourhood, in order to assure herself, by re-

peated visits, of his comfort and probable welfare. In this new trial of first parting with a child she suffered so acutely as to resolve that rather than be deprived one after another of the solace of her children's society, she would give up Wales and all her most cherished haunts and habits, and make a home for them near their future place of study, wherever circumstances might direct that to be.

Besides the local aid which she procured for her little students, she personally gave the most assiduous attention to their home instruction; it took precedence even of the literary toil into which, for their sakes, her poetic promptings were goaded; and when her boys ran out into the open air to play, delighting in their delight, she would either assist in flying their kites, spinning their tops, and keeping up their shuttlecocks, or sitting in some grassy and well-wooded nook or dingle, conscious of their trundling hoops and nimble feet around her, she would indulge in reading some congenial book, or quietly meditating upon Nature's great and minute vastness would gather in rich stores of convertible treasure.

CHAPTER XVII.

A.D. 1835.—Part II.

The Poetesses.

Felicia-Dorothea Hemans.

"Oh, heirs of genius! learn
From the sky's bird your way! No joy may fill
Your hearts, no gift of holy strength be won
To bless your songs, ye children of the sun,
Save by the unswerving flight, upward, and upward still!" *

Felicia-Dorothea Hemans.

A passage in Blanco White's 'Letters from Spain, by Don Leucadio Doblado,' published in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' first suggested to her mind the idea of 'The Forest Sanctuary.' She began writing this poem in the autumn of 1824, and as she completed the component parts, used to bring them of an evening to the fireside for the entertainment of the assembled family party, and to receive the criticisms of her affectionate audience. The key-note of her strain was pitched in sympathy with their feelings; every sentence, phrase, and epithet, and all the meanings, and inflections, and gradations of meaning, conveyed by each and all have evidently been subjected to attentive examination; and the judgment of the poetess, warmed and sharpened by friendly collision, as a knife acquires fineness of edge by acting and bearing weight upon oiled

* Mrs. Hemans, 'On Watching the Flight of a Skylark.'

leather, has subtilely penetrated and wrought out every part with a minute and exquisite finish, and given to the whole an extraordinary completeness. The poem conveys an impression of having been written in sadness; an air of languid and subdued, though inextinguishable. enthusiasm pervades it; all nature in its luxuriant descriptions seems to suffer the summer melancholy of a hovering thunderstorm; the events and sentiments accord with the pervading air; and the most perfect harmony of metre and grammatical construction produces a rhythm of unsurpassable, though somewhat monotonous sweetness.

In the spring time of the year 1825, Mrs. Browne, with her daughters, and the children of Mrs. Hemans, removed from Bronwylfa to Rhyllon, a comfortable house about a quarter of a mile distant, on the opposite side of the river Clwyd, and in full sight, from the windows, of their former abode. In the course of the same season, Major-General Sir Henry Browne brought home a second wife to Bronwylfa; and Lieutenant-Colonel, then Major Browne, returning with his wife from a long sojourn in Canada, took up his residence under the maternal roof at Rhyllon. Mustering thus in two households within view, all her surviving progeny, her daughter-in-law and grandchildren, Mrs. Browne, ever placid and serene, became so happy, and so thankfully conscious of her happiness, that only a change to Heaven could increase it; while an aggregate of friendly enjoyment was produced among the members of her family, which rendered the next few months the happiest epoch in the review of many whose lives were there interwoven.

The welcome which Mrs. Hemans's poems met with beyond the Atlantic was, perhaps, on the whole, more general, eager, and rapturous than in Great Britain. A

correspondence with Dr. Bancroft, their public admirer and eulogist, first informed her of the fact; and in 1825, Professor Norton, of Boston, New England, introduced himself to her by a written offer of superintending for her benefit the publication of a complete American edition of her works. Had she chosen to emigrate, and to enter upon the career of an editor and authoress in America, arrangements would have been made to secure her pecuniary prosperity.

In 1826, 'The Forest Sanctuary' was published in a volume which also contained the 'Lays of Many Lands,' and a collection of 'Miscellaneous Pieces,' reprinted from the Magazines and Annuals. The Lays are all elegant, and in each may be found one or more fine stanzas, but only the 'Greek Funeral Chant or Myriologue' is distinguished among them for extraordinary beauty and pathos; Mrs. Hemans's heart having supplied the mother, the betrothed bride, and the sister of the slain hero each with the fittest possible appropriations of tender lamentation.

The 'Miscellaneous Pieces' include some of those which the world will never "willingly let die:" 'The Treasures of the Deep,' 'Bring Flowers,' 'The Parting of Summer,' 'The Songs of our Fathers,' 'Kindred Hearts,' 'Evening Prayer at a Girl's School,' 'The Hour of Death,' 'The Breeze from Shore,' 'Music of Yesterday,' and 'The Forsaken Hearth;' besides a dozen others of less general interest, though scarcely less beautiful; and a few of little worth, among them 'Thekla's Song.'

A second series of 'Miscellaneous Pieces,' also printed in the fourth volume of the collected 'Works,' includes the imperishable 'Ivy Song,' of which an altered copy is reprinted in the seventh volume; a duplicate of the 'Dirge,' from 'The Siege of Valencia,' lengthened by the interpo-

lation of a third verse between the original two; 'An Epitaph;' and 'A Monumental Inscription,' the first replete with solemn tenderness, the last with elevating piety; 'The Vaudois Valleys,' an expansion of Milton's sorrowfully grand sonnet 'On the Massacres in Piedmont,' and some other poems of inferior merit.

In April she wrote her sweet lines 'To the Memory of a Sister-in-law,' for the same year saw the Bronwylfa hearth again rendered desolate by death, and Sir Henry a second time a widower. Not long after this afflictive stroke, the health of the pious and excellent mother of the race underwent a threatening change. During the eight painful months which followed, her children, and more especially her dearest and fondest child, watched with ceaseless anxiety the fluctuating yet unremitting progress of bodily decay; while the devout and active mind of the sufferer watched also and warded over them with careful, cheerful, and tender sympathy, until at length she exchanged, in tranquil sleep, the peace of God on earth for the blessedness of Heaven, on the 11th of January, 1827.

Besides the extensive benefits conferred by the example and precepts of this admirable woman upon the other members of her family, and upon all who came in contact with her in domestic and social life, the effects which she was instrumental in producing upon the soul, and spirit, and conduct of her daughter, Mrs. Hemans, entitle her to the veneration and gratitude of all, who throughout the British Empire, and throughout all the regions ruled by the British tongue, have read and taken to heart her pure, ennobling, and exalting poetic teachings. The mysterious workings of cause and effect, under providential guidance, between the quiet routine of that secluded saint's daily life, and the performance of ten thousand good deeds in

remote countries by people awakened to spiritual energy through the simple agency of a book, or a single poem, will probably be traced with admiration when earth's probationers look back from Heaven upon their journey.

The 'Hymn by the Sick-bed of a Mother,' with its agonized intensity of sorrow, the deeply plaintive 'No More,' the 'Passing Away,' the 'Lines to a Butterfly resting on a Scull,' 'The Subterranean Stream,' 'The Silent Multitude,' 'The Antique Sepulchre,' 'The Memory of the Dead,' 'The Angel's Greeting,' 'The Charmed Picture,' 'The Deserted House,' and incidental allusions in many subsequent poems, reiterate upon her own heart the awful lessons taught by this irreparable bereavement, indicate the strength of her filial affection, and the anguish of separation from the parent whose love had been the only steadfast joy of her life. Fondly as she cherished her children, their love as children could not relieve her sense of desolation. She needed the supporting and sustaining attachment of persons relatively superior to her. Those poems which relate to her mother give, in their mournful and almost infantine simplicity, their candid avowal of faults and failings, their prostrate grief and deploring helplessness, so complete an unveiling of her inmost soul in its weakness and its nobleness, that no one can read them without tender sympathy: while the apt language of fine intellect, the poetic grace, the entrancing and harmonious melody of versification, put forth carelessly, and as it were at hazard and unawares, awaken reverential admiration. A character so dependent, so devoid of hardihood, so essentially feminine, and yet so enterprising and self-respecting, is almost an anomaly in the world of literature.

Mrs. Hemans bore the bitter agony of this separation with meek submission and unrepining fortitude. She knew

that her best earthly comforter, guide, and protector, the one being to whom she had been life's chief object, and who had loved her best, was passed away; and she foresaw the fearful enhancement of weight with which all cares and griefs must henceforth crush in upon her; while the loneliness, the forlornness of being left unsolaced by a mother's eye and voice, presented itself to her imagination with terrible truthfulness. To have been left an orphan in early youth would probably have been less trying. Now, for the first time, she felt in its full force, what it was to be a forsaken wife, to sustain the social position of a slighted woman, and to undertake the responsibilities both of father and mother to her children. The world honoured her, friends idolized her, her family loved her with enthusiasm; she gratefully appreciated every form and degree of attachment, and exerted her energies to the utmost to be to each and to all everything that could be demanded or expected from her. She formed new plans for her children's benefit, she projected new literary enterprises, she cultivated new friendships, she acceded to the wishes of her acquaintance in things to which nothing led her excepting the desire to give them pleasure. In the same year, Mr. W. E. West made a sojourn of several weeks at Rhyllon, on purpose to take several portraits of her. He produced three, one of them for Mr. A. A. Watts's Gallery of the Living Authors of Great Britain; one, which became the property of Professor Norton; and a third, deemed the best likeness ever taken of Mrs. Hemans, which he presented to her sister.

Having sent a manuscript copy of her 'Hymns for Childhood,' to Professor Norton, for the use of his own family, he, with her permission, allowed it to be printed in 1827, under his auspices, at Boston, in New England.

These 'Hymns,' which connect the gratification of the eye with life's destinies and with just sentiments, have no peculiar adaptation to childhood, but are equally suitable for adolescence, or manhood, and still more so for womanhood. Mrs. Hemans's mental and moral perceptions were so uniformly clear and bright, that few intellects at any age could find difficulty in following their lucid track; nevertheless, she had not that particular faculty for instruction which consists in assuming the point of view of other and differently constituted minds in various stages of development. Her art consisted rather in wafting people gently away in her own stream, than in floating as a pilot on their rafts.

Up to the date of 'The Forest Sanctuary,' her compositions show little more than that upper current of habitual interest in nature, history, and the fine arts, which glided calmly and brightly over turbid depths of suffering. Family sympathy in active and visible exercise yielding hourly balm to her bosom grief, and soothing its poignancy, had enabled her in that lovely poem to pour forth much of her own inward self; and subsequently she acquired courage freely to throw her heart into her passing theme. Her mother's death, casting back upon herself many feelings which would otherwise have ebbed away secretly and safely, probably led afterwards to that fervid utterance of her very soul in poetry, which tended for a time to transform an innocuous and pleasing occupation into an exhausting and health-destroying process.

In May, 1828, her 'Records of Woman,' a series of nineteen poems, of which thirteen are narrative and three monumental, was published in Edinburgh. All these poems, founded on facts or recorded incidents, Mrs. Hemans has made inalienably her own, not by a mere paraphrastic

version, but by the absolute fusion and complete recasting of material in amalgamation with ore of the richest kind from her own mines. In thus exemplifying the characteristics of women, by instances of lofty self-sacrifice, tender devotion, attractive amiability, and inextinguishable faithfulness, she has indeed coined and exhibited her very self. 'Arabella Stuart' offers an exquisite correlative, corrective, and counteractive of Pope's 'Epistle' in a similar subject treated by a feminine hand. The scenic accessories with which she adorns a story of lonely and monotonous imprisonment, render every division a pausing place for enjoyment and admiration.

> "Misery still delights to trace
> Its semblance in another's case;"

and 'Properzia Rossi' tells but too plainly the recorder's own tale, while relating the unrequited, ill-requited love of a woman of genius, who yearns for the affection of one, and sickens at the world's applause.

In her circumstances to write such a series was hazardous to health; to write 'Properzia Rossi' was almost suicidal. It gives a heartache to the reader to think of the motherless disconsolate grief under which she must have suffered with such unyielding dignity.

In the summer of the year 1828, Mrs. Hemans paid another visit of several weeks to her kind friends at Wavertree Lodge; who, alarmed at the change which had taken place in her health, prevailed on her to place herself immediately under medical care.

Professor and Mrs. Norton having just reached Liverpool at this time, on a visit from America, their personal introduction agreeably enhanced the interest of her sojourn, which was also remarkable for her first personal acquaintance with Mary Howitt, and with the Chorley family.

Her intercourse in the last named instance began with a request that she would become a contributor to their annual called 'The Winter's Wreath,' and with her ready compliance. Assured of finding in Mrs. Lawrence of Wavertree Hall, in the Parks of Wavertree Lodge, and in the Chorleys, friends and companions after her own heart, and trusting that Liverpool would prove a desirable place of education for her boys, she selected a small house in the village of Wavertree for her new abode, and returned late in the month of July to Rhyllon, in order to make preparations for the intended removal.

Miss Jewsbury, with whom she had been previously in correspondence, was then domiciled with her young wards at Pumrhôs, a cottage within half-a-mile of Rhyllon. The enthusiastic admiration and affection evinced by Miss Jewsbury for Mrs. Hemans soothed her perturbed feelings, and elicited a return of deep and true attachment. Their minds were of an opposite cast, and might almost have served as types of distinctive classes, ratiocination being the chief characteristic of one, and intuitive fineness of perception of the other.

They took reciprocal delight in each other's conversation. The thoughts of Miss Jewsbury were, like frost and lime, wholesome correctives to those of Mrs. Hemans; the thoughts of Mrs. Hemans were like overflowing brooks and sunny showers to those of Miss Jewsbury, softening and enriching them. Mrs. Hemans always avowed her sense of obligation to Miss Jewsbury for leading her to enter more fully than she had ever done before into the devout spirit of Wordsworth's poetry, and for making her first acquainted with many of his compositions. Among the latter was 'Laodamia,' which falling upon the tinder of many a burnt up figment of former fancies set it smoul-

dering again to the detriment of her peace. Although Miss Jewsbury's habit of analyzing character was altogether displeasing and repugnant to Mrs. Hemans, she submitted her own guileless and unreserved self to dissection with the complacency attendant on having nothing to hide, and on having a noble nature thoroughly understood.

This autumn, too, brought James Montgomery to Rhyllon. He came, like a true poet, to offer honest homage to Mrs. Hemans, on his return from exploring Snowdon, where he had caught the true spirit of old Cymrû's legends in which she took invariable interest. Indeed, the love of fairy tales, a taste for the preternatural, formed a recommendation to her favour—so strong, that even her regard for Bishop Heber was increased by his possessing it.

She had hoped that her brother, Lieutenant-Colonel George Browne, and his wife would remove with her to Wavertree and reside with her there. This plan was frustrated by his receiving an appointment as Commissioner of Police in Ireland, whither he was obliged immediately to repair. Under this disappointment she wrote to a friend at Liverpool:—"I fear I shall feel very lonely and brotherless, as I have always been one of a large family circle before. I could laugh or cry when I think of the helplessness, natural and acquired, which I have contrived to accumulate." Of her sister, in reference to this parting, she says:—"In mine, I shall be deprived of the only real companion I have ever had; she is to leave me on Saturday next, and I am haunted by those melancholy words of St. Leon's guest, the unhappy old man with his immortal gifts, Alone! Alone!"

Her bitterest anguish in this family dispersion must have consisted in parting with her two eldest boys on their setting out for Rome to join their father. The voice, the

footsteps of the long absent one, so long listened for, had never approached. On hearing she was motherless, he had not returned to protect and console her; there was a possibility that he might teach her darlings to love her less, there was an absolute certainty of his confirmed alienation. On the point of departure from Rhyllon, she wrote her 'Farewell to Wales,' to the Welsh air of Llwyn On; one of those effusions which, called forth by the transient occasion of an hour, lives on for the use of centuries. Writing to her confidential friend at Wavertree Lodge, concerning the sorrows and conflicts of this period, she exclaims: "Oh! that I could but lift up my heart, and sustain it, at that height where alone the calm sunshine is!" *

There were many alleviating circumstances attendant on this migration. She was going to the neighbourhood of the city in which she was born; she had many intimate and well-tried friends there, she had occasionally trodden its streets, had often seen its spires from the Cefn-yr-Ogo, and learned of the inhabitants of Denbighshire and Flintshire to regard it as a North Welsh metropolis. Besides, her eldest brother continued to be a Welsh landowner and resident, her sister had become the wife of a Montgomeryshire rector, and these remaining ties prevented her from feeling the pang of final separation from the land of her own and of her children's childhood, of her almost life-long home, and of her mother's grave. Yet the pain of parting was acute, and greatly augmented by the affectionate regrets and blessings of the Welsh peasants, who kissed the very gate-posts through which she had passed. Kind friends met her at Bagilt, and on board the packet, and conducted her little party in safety to Wavertree Lodge, on one of the last

* 'Memoir,' p. 151.

days of the month of September, in the year 1828. In her first letter from thence to St. Asaph, she writes:—"Oh! that Tuesday morning! I literally covered my face all the way from Bronwylfa, until the boys told me we had passed the Clwyd range of hills. Then something of the bitterness was over." *

To the period intervening between the publication of 'The Forest Sanctuary' and her departure from Wales belong most of the pieces which stand in the fifth volume of the collected 'Works,' under the title of 'Miscellaneous Poems.' All these are of perennial worth. Among them is 'An Hour of Romance,' which literally details her own feelings when sitting in the Rhyllon dingle in summer-time reading Scott's 'Talisman,' and aroused from the illusion by her jocund children: that touching lyric 'The Homes of England,' which is worthy to last as long as the nation does; the famous 'Pilgrim Fathers,' of which the population of North America will take charge; the witching 'Spells of Home;' 'The Graves of a Household,' which, even among her own productions, can scarcely find a parallel in tender truth; and 'The Sunbeam,' which being —in its very first conception of the effect of a sunbeam in all sorts of places—genuine poetry, is also perfect in execution. There also is 'Mozart's Requiem,' melodious and affecting as the music which it celebrates; a masterly proof of her rich, deep, and passionate susceptibilities of earthly joy and pain, and of the poetic power of expressing them with which she was dowered. The composition of this piece excited her feelings to a degree which seriously impaired her health, and even threatened danger to her life. From this brilliant emanation of her genius might be demonstrated the partial cultivation of mind which left

* 'Memoir,' p. 152.

its most defective province in sterility. Her imagination, although invariably applied to pure and noble purposes, was habitually allowed to hover, with emotional and picturesque exaggeration, over individual mortifications, disappointments, and cares. Conscience held all her moral feelings in strict control; but sound, deductive reason was unhappily denied due mental predominance.

Resting awhile among her good and hospitable friends at Wavertree Lodge, to soothe her spirits and recruit her strength, she at last removed with her three boys to the small house which the care of those friends had fitted up for her reception. For the first time in her life she then entered on the sole charge of household management—for the first time became liable to the harassing cares of practical life, amenable to the ordinary rules of general society, and subject to the formal restraints of the peculiar code of manners belonging to a great commercial town and its suburbs. In exchanging rural habits for those of a busy mart of merchandise—the freshness and freedom of nature for the dingy disproportions of wharves, warehouses, and streets—the horizon of mountain-curves for the level lines that as far as possible deteriorate the very sky—familiar and loving faces for the rude stare of strangers and the simper of affected courtesy—her feelings experienced a series of painful shocks; and, with the instinct of self-protection, she held back from the gay world of Liverpool and Wavertree, and sought her social pleasures only on the hearth of a few chosen friends, or on her own. She could not submit habitually to endure the burdensome company of people who were obviously as incapable of deriving pleasure or profit from her conversation as of conferring it by their own. She was too sincere to practise or to tolerate the accepted forms of heartless

intercourse which serve to hold together large troops of nominal friends. The whole routine of public amusements, gregarious assemblies, conventional usages, and formal compliments, was utterly distasteful to her. Besides all this, she had that earnest and ever-present sense of working out a great purpose in life's days and hours, which rendered all hindrances and impediments to her studies ineffably irksome. It was the very simplicity of her character which prevented it from being understood. The lower nature can never comprehend the higher, and is apt to suppose that where versatile powers exist there must be much complexity, not being able to conceive of such powers in easy and natural exercise, but patching up a notion of them as separate, artificial exertions of eccentric capabilities, attended by the difficult setting in action of many wheels and chains of artfully-hidden machinery: in short, the dunces think the gifted must have as much trouble in being clever as it would cost them to be so.

It was not, however, only by the worldly, whether gay or dull, that she was misapprehended. The grave and sensible often disliked her vivacity, and censured her intolerance of syllogistic argument. Accustomed to be the idol of a domestic circle, where affection rendered others subservient to her tastes, she desired beyond that circle to find only congenial objects on which her imagination might always freely act, and where it might find occasional reciprocation. The fulsomeness of flattery and adulation disgusted her. She cared not for admiration unless it was affectionately sincere. The approbation of her works which proceeded from critical judgment encouraged and strengthened her efforts to attain excellence; the love for them which produced personal friends cheered her heart and brightened her lot. She seems from girlhood to have

aimed at a merely oral reputation; and now that the eyes of thousands followed her as one of the most eminent women of her time, she fain would have shrunk away like that delicate Medusa whose presence in a vessel can only be ascertained by the faint shadow of its form. Describing her own sensations at this epoch, she says: "I have no taste, no health for the enjoyment of extensive society. I have been all my life a creature of hearth and home; and now that 'the mother that looked on my childhood is gone,' and that my brothers and sisters are scattered far and wide, I have no wish but to gather around the few *friends* who will love me and enter into my pursuits. I wish I could give you the least idea of what *kindness* is to me—how much more, how far dearer than fame." *

She often derived enjoyment from the quiet conversation of Mr. Roscoe; and occasionally she attended public places and private parties during her residence at Liverpool; but the oppressive sense of breathing in a crowd threw her thoughts and feelings back upon herself in forlorn depression. It was not in her nature—it is not in the nature of genius—to shrink back from bearing its part in the social exchange and collision of intellect. She never failed to bring in rich and curious contributions of entertaining matter, nor to exercise her various talents, her eloquence, wit, and satiric piquancy for the amusement and delight of her companions: her marvellous memory and all its stores of reading and observation, her brilliant faculties of combination and illustration, were set, whether the theme were grave or gay, with equal readiness at their service, although her lively spirits, forcing their way like gleams of sunshine through mists, were often followed by silent tears. To congenial associates, wherever she went,

* 'Memorials,' vol. i., p. 209.

she was just the same artless, confiding, and communicative creature she had been at her mother's fireside. To the outer world she was incomprehensible. In a letter addressed at this period to an intimate friend and former neighbour, she says: "How I look back upon the comparative peace and repose of Bronwylfa and Rhyllon!—a walk in the hay-field, the children playing round me, my dear mother coming to call me in from the dew, and you perhaps making your appearance just in the gloaming with a great bunch of flowers in your kind hand. How have those things passed away from me; and how much more was I formed for their quiet happiness than for the weary part of femme célèbre which I am now enacting! But my heart is with those home enjoyments, and there, however tried, excited, and wrung, it will ever remain."

She had scarcely got settled in her new home, and begun to make what acknowledgments she could for the civilities and kindnesses which new friends and old ones, and legions of acquaintance proffered and pressed upon her, before her three children were seized with the whooping-cough. For several months she had subsequently to endure not only maternal anxieties, the fatigue of nursing, and the distracting jar of the spasmodic symptoms, but also to suffer from a personal attack of the same harassing disorder. In the spring of 1829, change of air to the bathing-place of Seacombe for a month, aided in restoring and reviving the invalids. While there her interest was strongly aroused by attending divine service at the Mariners' Floating Church, and by conversing with the Rev. Mr. Scoresby concerning his congregation. Anything connected with the sea was always attractive to her, for the sea held over her a sort of melancholy fascination.

Early in the month of July Mrs. Hemans, having ac-

cepted a pressing invitation to visit Scotland, where her writings had raised up for her numerous hosts of yet unseen friends, committed the eldest of her three younger sons to the charge of the kind inhabitants of Wavertree Lodge, and, accompanied by the two others and by her maid, embarked for the Frith of Forth. On their arrival in Edinburgh, her name won general homage, and all kinds of attention were spontaneously lavished upon her. Remaining a few days there, she examined the principal objects of local interest, especially Holyrood Palace. From Edinburgh she proceeded into Roxburghshire, to her main point of destination, Chiefswood, near Melrose, then the residence of Mr. Thomas Hamilton (the author of 'Cyril Thornton') and of his amiable wife. Her buoyant spirits, rejoicing in a return to free hills and streams, gave for a time a favourable impulse to her feeble health. Sir Walter Scott was her near neighbour, and, becoming personally acquainted, they at once associated together as kindred of the lyre,—wandering through the Rhymour's Glen, crossing ankle-deep the haunted bourn, making their way through thickets of wild-roses, standing beneath the rowan-tree at the rocky pool in the plash of the waterfall, resting on a grassy bank in the wood, plucking sprays of wild-strawberries while he narrated stories of old times, and local legends about all creatures, natural and preternatural, biped, quadruped, and indefinable. Her mind for the time agreeably resigned itself to the mediæval guidance of his. He and Mrs. Lockhart made a party for her to visit the Yarrow. He took her to Newark Tower, along the Ettrick, where they talked of Aneurin and his poetry; and through the Tweed back to Abbotsford, where he exhibited his collection of swords, and gratified her peculiar predilection for the glitter and the gleam of steel.

Then he received her and her boys altogether into his own feudal home, among his children and grandchildren, and treated the recent strangers with all the cheerful, benignant courtesy of his fatherly heart. Nor was she backward in exerting herself to give him pleasure: every morning she rambled about on foot, or drove out with him; every evening she put forth her various powers, conversational or musical, for his amusement. While she was his guest the Duc de Chartres and his suite arrived at Abbotsford. Mrs. Hemans, relating the fact, adds: "I was a little nervous when Sir Walter handed me to the piano, on which I was the sole performer, for the delectation of the courtly party!"* On leaving Abbotsford, she remarks: "I shall not forget the kindness of Sir Walter's farewell, so frank, and simple, and heartfelt, as he said to me, 'There are some whom we meet, and should like ever after to claim as kith and kin; and you are one of those.'"†

From thence Mrs. Hemans proceeded to the house of Sir David and the Hon. Lady Wedderburn, in Edinburgh. Among the eminent persons to whom she became personally known during this sojourn were—Mr. Henry Mackenzie, the author of 'The Man of Feeling;' Mr. Alison; Captain Basil Hall; Mr. Jeffrey, with whom she spent a brightly-intellectual day at Craig Crook; and Mrs. Grant of Laggan. The latter has traced a shadowy sketch of the English poetess's passing image, which is worthy of note as a testimony of the general effect produced by her appearance and manners. "I had a charming guest before I left town to come here—no other than the very charming Mrs. Hemans, for whom I have long felt something very like affection. She had two fine boys with her, the objects visibly of very great tenderness, who seem equally attached

* 'Memoir,' pp. 181-2. † Ibid., p. 191.

to her. She is entirely feminine; and her language has a charm like that of her verse—the same ease and peculiar grace, with more vivacity. If affliction had not laid a heavy hand upon her she would be playful: she has not the slightest tinge of affectation; and is so refined, so gentle, that you must both love and respect her." *

Three at least of her poems sprung up in Scottish soil: one, 'On a Remembered Picture,' which she wrote at Chiefswood under the promptings of the portrait at Holyrood, commonly known as Rizzio's; another, 'The Farewell to Abbotsford,' which she put into Sir Walter Scott's hand at the gate in departing; and 'The Rhine Song,' founded on an anecdote related to her by Sir Walter: to say nothing of the whimsical 'Last Words of the Last Wasp in Scotland,' written in a jousting-match of wit with Mr. Sharpe.

She was on the point of quitting Edinburgh when the entreaties of her aged friend Sir Robert Liston prevailed on her to visit him at Milburn Tower, and there to sit to Mr. Angus Fletcher for a bust. The necessary process having been gone through, she returned with her boys to her house at Wavertree, and her daily life resumed its ordinary course. Miss Jewsbury soon afterwards became for a short time her guest. At this time her whole organization, physical and mental, went wrong. Even her appetite for books grew partial and unhealthy. The German poets, Madame de Staël, Lord Byron, Shelley, Godwin, and a few articles in periodicals, formed her staple diet. Her mind dwelt inordinately on her griefs, and recoiled to them again from diversions, which proved rather interruptions than recreations. Frequent accesses of bodily illness, with consequent wakefulness and restlessness, added to the evil complication of disorders, and her sensitiveness

* Mrs. Grant's 'Letters,' vol. iii. p. 156. Date August, 1829.

of temperament became painfully aggravated. Her yearning after the vague, the indefinite, and the supernatural found expression in music, for which her love heightened to excess. The constant remembrance of her mother brought the world of spirits as it were into close contact; a desire to apprehend the unrevealed and impenetrable mysteries of existence haunted her perpetually, and to her former burden of afflictions and cares she added yet another. "La maladie principale de l'homme," declares Blaise Pascal, "est la curiosité inquiète des choses qu'il ne peut savoir"—The chief sickness of humanity consists in the restless desire to know things that cannot be known. Under this tension of thought and feeling Mrs. Hemans composed 'The Spirit's Return,' a poem of exquisite and almost unique beauty, forming the nucleus of many bewildering rays of ghastly splendour without light or warmth, of which the erratic paths may be traced in her 'Works,' vol. ii. pp. 244, 262; vol. iii. pp. 5, 216; vol. iv. pp. 96, 99; vol. v. pp. 25, 26, 259, 268; and vol. vi. pp. 23 and 41. The effect of writing 'The Spirit's Return' was pernicious to her health, and corrosive of her peace of mind. Well was it for her that she had children calling her back every hour with the voice of love from such visionary contemplations to the tangible and visible interests of a work-a-day world!

By way of counteracting the dread of the mischief which this poem may do to the over-sensitive and transcendental, there is some degree of satisfaction in discerning its obvious use to grosser minds as an antidote to a modern and unfortunately common form of the same general malady—that disquieting desire to attain forbidden knowledge. The heroine, soliloquizing when the hour of unearthly communion has past, exclaims:

"I dwell midst throngs apart
In the cold silence of the stranger's heart;
A fixed, immortal shadow stands between
My spirit and life's fast receding scene;
A gift hath severed me from human ties,
A power is gone from all earth's melodies,
Which never may return: their chords are broken,
The music of another land hath spoken,
No after sound is sweet!"

How would a mind so full of penetrative power, so sublimated, rarefied, and etherialised, have revolted from the low, coarse folly of attempting to enter into communication with the separate spirits of departed friends by means of tables and sticks!—means better worthy to convey to human sense the sagacious acquirements of birds or a learned quadruped's acquaintance with the alphabet. To such wooden materialists 'The Return of the Spirit' would certainly be safe, and might probably be profitable reading. Questioners would scarcely fail to find the palpable deception dispelled by the dreamy illusion.

Early in the year 1830, Mrs. Hemans committed to the press a volume containing 'The Spirit's Return,' the brief mediæval romance called 'The Lady of Province,' and a series of thirty-one short poems, which had previously appeared in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' under the same general title there borne, 'Songs of the Affections.' They all answer the implied description of that title, and are as well fitted to gratify the ear and the imagination as the heart and intellect.

Longing again for rural quiet, she indulged herself, in the month of June, with a visit to Westmorland. The first fortnight of that sojourn she passed, together with her youngest child, under the roof of Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth, at Rydal Mount; and from thence she wrote many letters deeply tinctured with the colour of the scene. Dating

the 24th, and addressing a friend, she says: "I seem to be writing to you almost from the spirit-land—all here is so brightly still, so remote from every-day cares and tumults, that sometimes I can scarcely persuade myself I am not dreaming. It scarcely seems to be the light of common day that is clothing the woody mountains before me: there is something almost visionary in its soft gleams and ever-changing shadows. I am charmed with Mr. Wordsworth, whose kindness to me has quite a soothing influence over my spirits. Oh, what relief, what blessing there is in the feeling of admiration when it can be freely poured forth! There is a daily beauty in his life which is in such lovely harmony with his poetry, that I am thankful to have witnessed and felt it. He gives me a good deal of his society, reads to me, walks with me, leads my pony when I ride; and I begin to talk with him as with a sort of paternal friend. The whole of this morning he kindly passed in reading to me. . . . . Yesterday evening he walked beside me as I rode on a long and lovely mountain-path high above Grasmere Lake." *

Removing from the poet's happy and tranquillising home to lodgings at Dove's Nest, she reassembled there her three younger children. Writing from thence to another friend, she remarks: "There is balm in the very stillness of the spot I have chosen. The majestic silence of these lakes, perfectly soundless and waveless as they are, except when troubled by the wind, is to me most impressive. Oh, what a poor thing is society in the presence of skies and waters and everlasting hills! You may be sure I do not allude to the dear intercourse of friend with friend, that would be dearer tenfold, more precious, more hallowed in scenes like this." †

* 'Memorials,' vol. ii., pp. 102-3. † Ibid., p. 119.

In walking and riding, in boating on Winandermere, in sitting out of doors sketching, in reading and conversing with Wordsworth, and in writing poetry and letters to tell absent friends all the calm, true pleasure she was enjoying, time glided away with the healthfulness of activity and the serenity of repose, until the advancing season brought an influx of tourists and visitors to disturb her. Yielding then to the repeated solicitations of her northern friends, known and unknown, she left the Lakes to make a tour of visits to Hopetoun House, Kinfauns, and other noble abodes, concluding with a second sojourn at Milburn Tower, during which her pleasant intercourse was renewed with the best ornaments of Edinburgh society. Enforced attention to the minor details of housekeeping, and the irresistible pressure of unsuitable society from all quarters, had rendered her house at Wavertree insufferably disagreeable; and if the severity of the Scottish climate had not threatened to be fatal to her, she would gladly have fixed her future home in Edinburgh. The family of Mr. J. C. Graves of Dublin were at that time the fellow-guests of Sir Robert Liston. Similarity of tastes having cemented a friendship between them and Mrs. Hemans, she was induced, at their recommendation, to make a voyage at once to Dublin, with a view to ascertaining its suitability as a place of residence. Her younger brother being settled in Ireland offered a magnetic inducement to this migration; and all that she met with on her tour of exploration tended to strengthen her incipient purpose. From Dublin she crossed the Channel to Holyhead, and travelled through the Island of Anglesea, and over the magnificent Menai Bridge, to Sir Henry Browne's place, her old home Bronwylfa. Referring to this journey in a letter, she remarks: "I strove in vain to conjure up the ghost of a Druid, or even of a

tree on its (Anglesea's) wide mountainous plains, which I really think nature must have produced to rest herself after the strong excitement of composing the Caernarvonshire hills. But I cannot tell you how much I wanted to express my feelings when at last that bold mountain-chain rose upon me in all its grandeur, with the crowning Snowdon (very superior, I assure you, in shape and feature to our friend Ben Lomond) maintaining his pride of place above the whole ridge; and the Menai Bridge, which I thought I should scarcely have noticed in the presence of those glorious heights, really seems from its magnificence a native feature of the scene, and nobly asserts the pre-eminence of mind above all other things."*

At Bronwylfa, her old Welsh neighbours flocked around her, entreating her with tears to come back and live among them again: old recollections, too, thronged thickly upon her, and she returned from thence to Wavertree with spirits agitated by alternating emotions, and a frame exhausted by excitement and fatigue. A winter of frequent illnesses and elastic recoveries, of fitful gaiety and sadness, of solitary musing and sociable exertions, followed. She wrote many letters and a few poems, read such books as chanced to fall under her notice, applied with fresh diligence to the study of music, composed airs to several of her own songs, entered when she could into everything notably intellectual or artistic which varied the passing pageants of the day; and prepared meanwhile for carrying out the plan of household removal which her elder brother's approbation had determined her to adopt.

Besides the poems already alluded to, some other pieces, and numerous songs, which she wrote at Wavertree, there are four which bear distinct marks of their local origin:

* 'Memorials,' vol ii., pp. 138-9.

one, 'To a Wandering Female Singer,' suggested by hearing the sweet voice of a vagrant in the street; another, the immortal 'Books and Flowers,' which took form in the congenial atmosphere of Wavertree Hall; 'The Haunted House'; and the somewhat-overpraised 'O'Connor's Child,' which describes a picture belonging to Mrs. Lawrence. That picture represents the heroine of Campbell's poem of the same title; and Mrs. Hemans having, in fact, made a partial translation of the story back into verse, has wasted some original and admirable touches upon a dilution and a superfluity.

Towards the close of the month of April, 1831, Mrs. Hemans, with her three younger sons, finally quitted Liverpool for Dublin. Arriving in that city, she spent several weeks among kind and hospitable friends, and in June passed on to the Hermitage, near Kilkenny, the temporary residence of her second brother and his wife. From thence she made an excursion one day to Woodstock, where Mr. and Lady Louisa Tighe had assembled the principal families of the neighbourhood to meet her, and where she found among the guests Mr. Henry Tighe, the widower of the poetess. It has been already mentioned (at page 264) that Mrs. Hemans recorded in verse her visit on this occasion to the grave of the author of 'Psyche,' and that she afterwards wrote a very beautiful sonnet on the 'Records of Immature Genius,' which were lent to her in manuscript for perusal. Her 'Lines for the Album at Rosanna' are likewise full of feeling. Mr. Henry Tighe paid her the scholar-like compliment of translating into Latin 'The Graves of a Household.'

Mrs. Hemans visited all the principal mansions, and all the most remarkable places around Kilkenny; and being soothed by the pleasant rural scenery, the view of distant

mountains, and the comfort of the fraternal roof, settled down once more to the study of books with the same interest as she used to do in Wales. The original poems and letters of Coleridge, before unknown to her, particularly engaged her attention at this time; and, taken in connection with the impressive remembrance of Wordsworth's serene contentment, practically exemplified in his every-day life, as well as poetically enunciated, they tended, together with the beneficial influence already obtained over her mind by the pious wisdom of some of her kindest friends in Dublin, to restore the calm tone which desolating affliction had jarred, and to brighten, elevate, and sustain, her devotional feelings. Here she wrote the 'Death-song of Alcestis,' which was first printed in 'The Amulet:' here also she wrote many other lyrics and songs.

Early in the autumn, she returned to her lodgings in Upper Pembroke Street, Dublin. There, within a morning drive of romantic and secluded scenery, exempted from the perturbations of housekeeping, freed from compulsive association with the ill-bred and uncultured, inured to celebrity, resigned to occasional sacrifices of leisure and inclination, and to the acceptance of homage politely rendered, Mrs. Hemans, seeking more intently than ever that peace which the world can neither impart nor destroy, now entered upon a new epoch of literary usefulness.

Her presence was welcomed in the highest circles; and at home there immediately closed around her a choice band of friends, attracted by kindred qualities, and attached by mutual esteem. Among these shone the Archbishop and Mrs. Whately, Sir William Hamilton and his family, Dr. and Mrs. Perceval, the Graves' family,

and the brother of Mrs. Lawrence, Colonel D'Aguilar and his wife.

Attendance upon several performances of Paganini during the musical festival held that autumn in the Irish metropolis, afforded her extreme and almost rapturous delight. She subsequently indulged herself with an excursion of several weeks into the county of Wicklow, and explored, with the sure-footed alertness of a true mountaineer, the curious ecclesiastical remains, the rocks and glens, the lakes and waterfalls. Continual exposure to wet weather during these investigations was in itself sufficient to counteract any benefit she might have gained from exercise in the open air, and the attentions which she received wherever she went were also injurious, for they stimulated her spirits to over-exertion, which sent her back wearied and worn down to Dublin. About this period the portrait of her—from which the frontispiece to Mr. H. F. Chorley's 'Memorials' has since been engraved—was painted in that city by Mr. Robertson.

In a letter dated December 9, 1831, Mrs. Hemans makes the following reference to Miss Jewsbury:—"I am very sorry to say that she is soon going to India, in which country Mr. Fletcher has obtained a chaplaincy. One can, indeed, ill afford to lose a friend in this cold, harsh world, more especially a gifted friend. How few have the least influence over one's feelings or imagination! I was truly concerned to hear of Mr. ——'s death, for I felt how much you would lose in him; and it is not easy for refined characters to attach themselves anew. Life has few companions for the delicate-minded."*

In a letter dated April 18, 1832, describing herself as recovering from a low fever, she adds:—"I think I should

* 'Memorials,' vol. ii., p. 230.

scarcely have revived, had not my spirits been calmer and my mind happier than has for some years been the case. During part of the time, when I could neither read nor listen to reading, I lay very meekly upon the sofa, reciting to myself almost all the poetry I ever read. I composed two or three melodies also; but having no one here who could help me to catch the fugitives, they have taken flight irrecoverably. . . . . I have lately written what I consider one of my best pieces, 'A Poet's Dying Hymn.'"*

Her judgment of her own compositions is usually correct. She here refers to one of the most exalted strains of triumphant piety ever raised by a female voice since the days of the Women of Israel. To its devotional and poetic value, it adds a biographical claim upon human interest, as a record of the sincerity and ever-increasing earnestness with which her life and genius had been consecrated to God's service.

Her sister, mentioning this poem as the first utterance of those presentiments of death which frequent illnesses and a failing constitution must long before have suggested to Mrs. Hemans, and as a striking manifestation of "that subdued and serene state of mind into which her once vivacious temperament and painfully-vibrating sensibilities were now so gently and happily subsiding," remarks that—"A delight in sacred literature, and particularly in the writings of our old divines, became from henceforward her predominant taste; and her earnest and diligent study of the Scriptures was a well-spring of daily increasing comfort."†

About this period the mind of Mrs. Hemans was deeply and gratefully touched by a visit from a stranger, who came for the sole purpose of offering to her his fervent

* 'Memoir,' p. 254; and 'Memorials,' vol. ii., p. 247.

† 'Memoir,' p. 254.

acknowledgments for conversion from infidelity by means of 'The Sceptic.'

In the spring and summer of the same year, when cholera was devastating the city, and black covered litters carrying patients to the hospitals, and biers bearing corpses to the grave, were passing with awful frequency through the streets, her letters express the solemn composure of her soul, her childlike dependence upon the care of God, and her unreserved submission to His will.

Towards the close of the year, suffering much from nervous acuteness of sensation, and especially in the sense of hearing, she removed her lodging to back rooms at No. 36, Stephen's Green, and from thence shortly afterwards to 20, Dawson Street.

Although she could no longer find enjoyment in her own harp and piano, yet from the performances of eminent musicians, who occasionally visited Dublin, she derived much gratification; and the choral music of St. Patrick's Cathedral gave her intense delight whenever her fluctuating health allowed of her attending Divine service there. A set of verses, their introductory heading, and an appropriate motto from Milton, form a durable memorial of those hours of devout ecstasy.

The death of Sir Walter Scott, which occurred in September, affected her deeply, and his 'Funeral Day' forms the subject of one of the most impressive and beautiful sacred poems she ever wrote. The three concluding stanzas of the hymn with which it closes are very striking, and the two last more especially:—

"By Him, who bowed to take
The death-cup for our sake,
The thorn, the rod;
From whom the last dismay
Was not to pass away,
Aid us, oh God!

Tremblers beside the grave,
We call on thee to save,
Father divine!
Hear, hear our suppliant breath,
Keep us in life and death,
Thine, only thine!"

This is the language of immortal hope, uttered with the energy of mortal agony.

Rather, perhaps, from excessive delicacy of taste, than from moral conviction or religious principle, her pleasure in theatrical exhibitions had long been almost extinct: nevertheless, in December, 1832, impelled by gratitude to a true and zealous friend, she attended, at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, the first representation of Colonel D'Aguilar's translation of Schiller's tragedy of 'Fiesco.'

The ridiculous manner in which her appropriate and elegant prologue was delivered, by an actor who waved a cocked hat as an emphatic accompaniment, and the undignified effect produced in the closing scene by the hero tumbling down, annoyed her greatly.

In the spring of the year 1833, her constitution again rallied, although it was a season to her both of painful and pleasurable emotion, her third son embarking, by his own free choice, for America, there to enter upon a mercantile course; and her second son, who had returned from the Military College of Sorèze, being employed upon the staff of the Ordnance Survey in Ireland.

Sometimes the irregular pulsation of the heart, and the flush of blood to the head, from which she suffered, disabled her for many weeks together from using a pen, and obliged her to have recourse to an amanuensis or a pencil; but whenever the disorder abated, all her benevolent and unceasing interest in distant friends flowed forth afresh in letters of animated inquiry and eloquent communication, and often in laborious and self-denying acts of service.

In the summer of 1833, she made another excursion into the county of Wicklow, attended only by her maid, and in the strictest privacy, seeking only the revival of health in the quiet enjoyment of leisure, amid fresh air and mountain scenery.

In the autumn of 1833, the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Hughes, the brother-in-law and sister of Mrs. Hemans, whom she had not seen for five years, came to Dublin. Her sister noticed with pain the worn and altered looks which time, care, and sickness, had rapidly wrought, but found her affections warm, her spirits good, her memory more richly fraught, her genius in more powerful action, and her heart more serenely and intently set upon high and holy enterprises than ever. The sisters parted with cheerful anticipations of meeting again in the following summer, both intending to visit Westmorland, and hoping to rejoice together among its lakes and mountains.

Mrs. Hemans had projected a series of critical commentaries and translated passages from the best German authors; and having, in pursuance of this intention, completed a paper upon the 'Tasso' of Goëthe, she sent it to the 'New Monthly Magazine,' and it appeared in the number for January, 1834.

Her introductory remarks on the character, preparation, and mission of a poet, and on the sources and subjects which most worthily cherish and employ poetic power, spring from the depths of her own experience, and agree with the axioms of the greatest masters of the art. Both the commentary and the translations evince discriminating taste and rare ability. It is probable, however, that instead of the moral which she draws from the drama, inferring that Goëthe desired to show the danger of the poet soiling his singing-robes with worldly dust, Goëthe,

who was in reality a man of the world, an adroit courtier, and an astute diplomatist, as well as a poet, sought, in the exuberance of his vanity, to aggrandize the better-adjusted proportions of his own inferior character, by strongly delineating the one-sidedness of Tasso's.

This was the only paper which she ever finished of the purposed series. The fragment of another, 'On the Iphigenia of Goëthe,' written in the same style, possesses great merit. These 'Studies' wholly agree with the thoughts and feelings expressed in all her poetry, but there they flow out freely, scattered, like wild flowers, in natural utterance; here, under the forced labour of disquisition, they glitter like gems artificially cut and set.

Early in the spring of the year 1834, her 'Hymns for Childhood,' a small volume which had previously appeared in America, was republished in Dublin, where her collected 'National Lyrics and Songs for Music' soon afterwards came out. From a note in the 'Works,' vol. vii., p. 102, it would seem that the 'Songs of a Guardian Spirit, Songs of Spain, Songs for Summer Hours, and Songs of Captivity,' which precede it, under the general heading of 'Lyrics,' were the 'Songs for Music' alluded to in the title-page of that publication.

Under the name of 'National Lyrics' there are but half a dozen pieces, of which the first, entitled 'The Themes of Song,' is the only one of remarkable excellence. The first division of the 'Lyrics' is full of that gentle and solemn sentiment which beseems communion with the unseen world. In the second, 'The Curfew Song of England' is out of place; and the 'Spanish Evening Hymn' carries its sentimental complaisance so far as to re-echo the strain of idolatrous worship to the Virgin Mary. The third affords, in all its thirteen Songs, examples of lyric beauty, and

more particularly in 'The Summer's Call' exhibits a wonderful assemblage of delightful images, and charms the ear with the sweet, rich music of its cadences.

Among the forty-nine pieces included in the fourth division, 'The Ivy Song' is almost a duplicate, many are full of pathos, and all breathe the spirit of genuine poetry—the original and peculiar poetry of her own heart and mind.

Soon after the two volumes just mentioned, Mrs. Hemans published her 'Scenes and Hymns of Life, and other Religious Poems.' The fire which had hitherto lighted and warmed the dwelling-place, here spreads forth and brightens into the consuming flame of the sacrificial altar. There is growing intensity of purpose in these poems. The sensuous imagery is but an indicative accessory of deep meanings, not merely, as of old, a series of important symbols forming prominent objects of attention. Several of the finest poems have previously been noticed under the dates of composition.

'The English Martyrs' is surcharged too deeply with human tenderness, and amid the calm sweetness of devout resignation to a heavenly Father and dependence on a pitying Saviour, the poem wants a more distinct recognition and exhibition of the consoling and spiritualising influences of the Divine Comforter.

In the 'Wood Walk and Hymn' the descriptions of woodland scenery and plants are exact: but the style is too obviously Wordsworthian, and the Wood Hymn quite unsuitable for the use of any child, however intelligent.

The poem called 'Flowers and Music in a Room of Sickness' is full of the most exquisite rural images, and brings them almost within sight, and touch, and inhaling. Like that balmy softness of air, however, and that extreme

transparency of atmosphere, which precede rain, indications of a too sensitive temperament under the influence of hopeless malady touch these lovely pictures with oppressive melancholy, and give to their harmonious rhythm the music of a dirge.

When marking out the distinctive features which characterise the modes of teaching adopted by St. Paul and by St. John, in illustration of the manifold ways in which the Sacred Scriptures are suited to the innumerable wants of innumerable human hearts, theologians show that the system of St. John begins with the announcement of God's love, and delineates the soul's gentle transition from the deadness of sin to the vital energy of holiness; knowledge of sin and sorrow for sin running parallel, as it were, with the experience of forgiving mercy and the renewal, aid, and consolation of the Divine Convictor and Comforter, followed by the abiding rest of the soul, through faith in the Saviour, upon the love of God the Father. Such seems to have been the process by which Mrs. Hemans was conducted through the world's tribulations to the attainment of the peace of God, and to the formation of His kingdom of righteousness and joy within her subdued and thankful heart. Slowly at first, rapidly at last, the work of probation was accomplished, and her spirit made ready for the celestial abode of the blessed.

On the 8th of May, 1834, writing from Dublin to a friend who had offered to give up to her a project of writing 'Tales of Art,' which he believed to be consonant with her taste and suited to her genius, she said:—"I could not, however, for many reasons avail myself of this sacrifice on your part, my dear friend. I have now passed through the feverish and somewhat visionary state of mind often connected with the passionate study of art in early

life; deep affections and deep sorrows seem to have solemnised my whole being, and I now feel as if bound to higher and holier tasks, which, though I may occasionally lay aside, I could not long wander from without some sense of dereliction. I am sure you can well understand, and will not fail to enter into all this. I hope it is no self-delusion, but I cannot help sometimes feeling as if it were my true task to enlarge the sphere of sacred poetry and extend its influence. When you receive my volume of 'Scenes and Hymns' you will see what I mean by enlarging its sphere, though my plans are yet imperfectly developed." * Referring to the same high purpose in another letter, written within the same week, she adds:—"I regard it, however, as an undertaking to be carried on and thoroughly wrought out during several years, as the more I look for indications of the connection between the human spirit and its Eternal Source, the more extensively I see those traces open before me, and the more indelibly they appear stamped upon our mysterious nature. I cannot but think that my mind has both expanded and strengthened during the contemplation of such things, and that it will thus by degrees arise to a higher and purer sphere of action than it has yet known. If any years of peace and affection be granted to my future life, I think I may prove that the discipline of storms has, at least, not been without purifying and ennobling influence." †

In accordance with these principles, she wrote the 'Female Characters of Scripture,'—suggested by reading Mrs. Sandford's 'Woman,'—the 'Sonnets Devotional and Memorial,' and all her subsequent poems. Among those 'Sonnets,' and in the collection of pieces entitled 'Records of the Spring of 1834,' retrospection speaks in varied tones,

* Chorley's 'Memorials,' vol. ii., pp. 283-5. † Ibid., p. 286.

all self-admonitory, while the scenes of her childhood, and even the trees and blossoms, glow around her in vivid yet tender truthfulness, and her genius draws up from their fragrance fresh dews of blessing. Wordsworth's description of herself—

"Sweet as the Spring, as ocean deep,"

applies to all these poems.

Later in the same spring she learned the afflicting news of her friend Mrs. Fletcher's death, and her health suffered from the shock, which heavily depressed her spirits. She was able, however, at this period to go about a little with her acquaintance, and on the 3rd of July she enjoyed with pensive pleasure a day's excursion to Lough Bray. Applying, with a saddened heart, and with energy too great for her enfeebled strength, to the arrangement of business and to the working up of the arrears of her over-burdening correspondence, her fever returned, and a state of physical prostration ensued, which frustrated the main object of her exertions, and put a hopeless end to her Westmorland expectations. As soon as she was sufficiently recovered to leave Dublin on a short journey, she again paid a lonely visit to the county of Wicklow, where certain favourite spots among the mountains reminded her of Wales, and the air seemed native. Unfortunately, there was scarlet fever at the little country inn where she put up, both herself and her maid caught the infection, and, after many weeks of weary suffering, returned convalescent to Dublin. A few days subsequently spent at Redesdale with the Archbishop and Mrs. Whately and a few intellectual friends cheered her worn spirits, revived her health, and enabled her once more on returning home to enter, though with effort, upon her ordinary occupations. In a letter, dated September 18, 1834, describing the 'Prigione' of

Silvio Pellico, and referring to the "brightening of heart and soul into the perfect day of Christian excellence, through all those fiery trials," she remarks, "When the weary struggle with wrong and injustice leads to such results, I then feel that the fearful mystery of life is solved for me." *

> "For those green heights of dewy stillness yearning,
> Whence glorious minds o'erlook this earth's unrest,"

Mrs. Hemans turned again with the joy of invigorated life to the pursuit of poetic excellence. The pieces bearing the general heading of 'Records of the Autumn of 1834' are elevated in tone, pure in style, admirable in versification, and worthy of attentive study as models of feminine composition.

Her medical attendants urging Mrs. Hemans to be as much as possible in the open air, she used often to sit alone in the gardens of the Dublin Society, at the hours when those gardens were least frequented by company. Reading there one evening, and engrossed with her book, a chilly fog imperceptibly came on, and only aroused her to the consciousness of its malignant presence by a violent access of shivering. That very night ague supervened, and continued for many weeks its alternate attacks and remissions. Aware that her constitution had broken up and no longer retained sufficient strength to repel the attacks of any malady, she felt that her allotted time was short, and sedulously availed herself of every possible opportunity of employing her genius as an entrusted talent to be laid out for the glory of God. She had previously commenced the ode 'Despondency and Aspiration,' and under these circumstances she dictated its completion, rendering it, perhaps, the finest poem ever composed by

* 'Memorials,' vol. ii., pp. 306-7.

an uninspired woman. While suffering from the same malady, she likewise dictated the series of beautiful sonnets, entitled 'Thoughts During Sickness,' among which, 'Intellectual Powers,' 'Sickness like Night,' and 'The Flight of the Spirit,' claim pre-eminence for truthful and intense poetic energy. A writer's best and most original thoughts usually arise out of the experience and personal history of the individual. Thus it was with Mrs. Hemans; and with these last and noblest exercises of her intellect the resonance of versification was complete.

Clinging to every faint hope of restoration or alleviation, her friendly physicians, although winter was already setting in, recommended change of air. The Archbishop and Mrs. Whately were then inhabiting their residence in the city of Dublin, and, with hospitable benevolence, they placed their country home, with all its comforts, at the disposal of Mrs. Hemans. Redesdale, or "The Palace," as she liked, in fond remembrance of the episcopal dwelling at St. Asaph, to call it, was only seven miles distant, and thither, early in December, she was removed, attended only by her faithful maid, Anna Creer, and accompanied by her two younger sons; Mrs. Whately, and other anxious and considerate friends, driving out frequently to see her and watch over her. At first, some mitigation of her most distressing symptoms took place, the energetic mind still exerting that marvellous power over the body which retards at intervals the progress of disease, though ultimately, perhaps, to accelerate decay. Possessing with augmented power all her fine natural qualities and acquirements, and more than ever capable of enjoying summer for its own sake, and winter because it threw the mind upon its own resources, a calm had descended upon her like that which settles at eve upon a summer landscape. The stillness,

the flowers, the peace around her, and the peace of God within, rendered this sojourn to her what good old Bunyan would have quaintly termed a land of Beulah. She tranquilly reviewed her whole life—the salutary effects of its severe discipline, the methods of Divine Providence, Redemption, Grace, all passed before her. In speaking on such topics with her attached servant, and expatiating on the kindness and human sympathy of the Divine Saviour, Mrs. Hemans used to say, with most literal and touching truth, "I am like a quiet babe at his feet, and yet my heart is full of his strength." *

The death of her friend, Mr. J. C. Graves, at this time affected her very sensibly, and she particularly regretted her own inability to solace and assist the bereaved daughters with her presence. In a letter of affectionate condolence, which she exerted herself to write to one of them, a very remarkable paragraph occurs :—"Few can more deeply enter into all you have suffered than myself, in whose mind the deathbed scene of my beloved and excellent mother is still as mournfully distinct as the week when that bereavement occurred, which threw me to struggle upon a harsh and bitter world. But, dearest C., there comes a time when we feel that God has drawn us nearer to himself by the chastening influence of such trials, and when we thankfully acknowledge that a higher state of spiritual purification, the great object, I truly believe, of all our earthly discipline, has been the blessed result of our calamities. I am sure that in your pure and pious mind this result will ere long take place, and that a deep and reconciling calm will follow the awakening sense of God's parental dealings with the spirit." †

One day in February, 1835, when the responsions of the

* 'Memoir,' p. 293. † Ibid., p. 294.

robins, to which she liked to listen, were giving way to the sawyer notes of the black-headed titmouse, Mrs. Hemans, being still at Redesdale, was aroused from the weary and almost lethargic languor of repose by the arrival of an unexpected letter, such a letter as she might in her childhood's days of illusive hope have imagined would arrive to alleviate a mother's solicitude and open a new and honourable path to independence. It came from Sir Robert Peel, who had attained for the first time the office of Prime Minister in the December of 1834. It rendered gratifying tribute to her genius and her public services, and it bestowed the appointment to a clerkship in the Admiralty upon her fourth son, enclosing a cheque for 100*l.* to defray the expenses of his outfit. Electrified by this good fortune, full of gratitude to Divine Providence, to Sir Robert Peel, and to the unknown agent whose benevolent intercession had obtained the welcome boon, while rejoicing in deliverance from a burdensome care, and in the safe prospects of her boy, her health received a favourable impulse, her spirits revived, and both to herself and others her recovery once more seemed possible. Surprise did not subsequently await the discovery that she owed this great obligation to the ever active kindness of her friend at Wavertree Hall.

Referring to this event in one of the last letters which she ever wrote to anybody, addressed to Mrs. Lawrence, Mrs. Hemans says:—"Well, my dear friend, I hope my life, if it be spared, may now flow back into its course of quiet thoughtfulness. You know in how rugged a channel the poor little stream has been forced, and through what rocks it has wrought its way, and it is now longing for repose in some still valley. It has ever been one of my regrets that the constant necessity of providing sums of

money to meet the exigencies of the boys' education has obliged me to waste my mind in what I consider mere desultory effusions :—

'Pouring myself away,
As a wild bird amid the foliage turns
That which within him thrills, and beats, and burns,
Into a fleeting lay.'

My wish ever was to concentrate all my mental energy in the production of some more noble and complete work; something of pure and holy excellence (if there be not too much presumption in the thought) which might permanently take its place as the work of a British poetess. I have always, hitherto, written as if in the breathing-times of storms and billows. Perhaps it may not even yet be too late to accomplish what I wish, though I sometimes feel my health so deeply prostrated that I cannot imagine how I am ever to be raised up again. But a greater freedom from those cares, of which I have been obliged to bear up under the whole responsibility, may do much to restore me; and though my spirits are greatly subdued by long sickness, I feel the powers of my mind in full maturity." *

These noble designs were not destined to be realised. The mental stress imposed on her weak frame had been too great for long endurance; reaction took place, and unequivocal symptoms of imminent danger showed themselves in a form which utterly precluded hope. Ague gave way to organic disease, and, early in March, acute suffering and the weakness of exhaustion required her removal to Dawson Street, that she might be nearer to her medical attendants. Henceforth she left her room no more, and was only lifted daily from her bed to a sofa. Her sister and other relations rallied hastily around her,

* 'Memoir,' pp. 296-7.

and paid her every attention which contributes to solace a sensitive sufferer. Commiseration she did not need, and she always checked its expression. With uncomplaining patience, with glad submission, she passed through this aggravated trial. Her faith and hope were securely set beyond the dark waves and shadows of mortality. The Atonement was her greatest consolation, and the favourite object of her contemplation. Her mind was clear, and free from gloom; her retentive memory enabled her to lie for hours repeating to herself chapters of the Bible and passages from Milton and Wordsworth. Her sleep was calm, and she asserted that, in the intervals of freedom from pain, "No poetry could express, nor imagination conceive, the visions of blessedness that flitted across her fancy, and made her waking hours more delightful than those even that were given to temporary repose." She sent messages of exhortation and encouragement to friends whom she loved, declaring the present help she was deriving, in the prospect of death, from Him who is the Light and Life of the world. She would occasionally request to be left entirely alone and in darkness, that, undisturbed by sound or light, she might hold sacred communion with her soul. She never for an instant forgot the kindest consideration for the convenience and comfort of those around her, and, in short, simply and earnestly endeavouring in all things to obey the promptings of a heaven-directed conscience, she unintentionally and unobtrusively afforded one of the loveliest examples ever left by a dying Christian.

When casual incidents brought back past times to her recollection, she would talk with her sister of Gwrych, and Bronwylfa, and Rhyllon—delighting especially in recurring to the days of their childhood, their haunts and

habits and innocent pleasures, and describing their early home at Gwrych, and their romantic mountain rambles, with a zest plainly proving, if proof beyond all her extant poetry were necessary, how deeply her intellectual character had been tinctured by old Cymrû.

She never in her life before had been so serenely and really happy. Gratitude for the love of God enhanced her sense of human kindness. Flowers and edible delicacies flowed in upon her incessantly, from friends, acquaintance, and strangers. Flowers, for their own sake, she valued to the last, and the kindness of the donor was always felt, however trivial the token might be.

Her sufferings became less acute as spring advanced, and her active mind, recalling with delight the unseen revival of external nature, again enlivened her feeble and emaciated frame with the deceptive appearance of returning convalescence. She used to have a little table set beside her bed and covered with books relating to picturesque, and especially to forest scenery, and would sometimes look into them, or have passages softly read to her. The poetry of Bowles, well known to her in youth; Wordsworth's 'Yarrow Revisited;' Willmott's 'Lives of the Sacred Poets;' and 'The Lives of Eminent Christians,' were also constantly at hand.

Early in April her sister was summoned away by the dangerous illness of Mr. Hughes, and she took leave of Mrs. Hemans with a feeling amounting almost to hope that they yet might meet again in this world.

Alternations of hectic animation and prostrate exhaustion continued for a while, and she sank very gradually. On Sunday, the 26th of April, she dictated to her younger brother the verses which proved to be her last. They form an integral and remarkable part of her history, indi-

cate the treasured wealth of her memory, the power of her imagination, and the sweet stream of holy thoughts which flowed incessantly within. She called these verses her—

SABBATH SONNET.

"How many blessed groups this hour are bending,
Through England's primrose meadow-paths their way
Towards spire and tower, midst shadowy elms ascending,
Whence the sweet chimes proclaim the hallowed day!
The halls from old heroic ages grey
Pour their fair children forth; and hamlets low,
With whose thick orchard-blooms the soft winds play,
Send out their inmates in a happy flow,
Like a freed vernal stream. I may not tread
With them those pathways—to the feverish bed
Of sickness bound: yet, oh my God! I bless
Thy mercy, that with Sabbath peace hath filled
My chastened heart, and all its throbbings stilled
To one deep calm of lowliest thankfulness!

April 26, 1835."

Upon the 12th of May, being the fourth Sunday after Easter, she was able, for the last time, to read to herself the appointed Collect, Epistle, and Gospel. During that week a heavy and weary languor oppressed her, and sometimes her mind slightly wandered, though always among lovely and pleasing visions. Dr. Croker used to read to her select sentences from the works of Archbishop Leighton, and to the last she listened to them with prayerful attention.

She slept with little intermission throughout Saturday, the 16th of May, and at nine o'clock that evening, while still asleep, her happy spirit gently passed away.

Her mortal remains were committed to a vault within the church of St. Anne, Dublin; a tablet, placed above the spot where they rest, is inscribed with her name, her age, the date of her death, and the eight lines of a dirge in her 'Siege of Valencia:'—

"Calm on the bosom of thy God,
Fair spirit, rest thee now!
E'en while with us thy footsteps trod,
His seal was on thy brow.
Dust to its narrow house beneath!
Soul to its place on high!
They that have seen thy look in death,
No more may fear to die."

The tacit homage rendered to her by her nearest relations is very expressive. Beneath the engraved miniature of Mrs. Browne forming the frontispiece to the seventh volume of Mrs. Hemans's Works, stand the words "Mrs. Hemans's Mother." The title-page to the first volume announces 'A Memoir by her Sister,' and the mural tablet in the cathedral of St. Asaph, casting into abeyance military and knightly honours, records that—

"This tablet,
Placed here by her Brothers,
is in memory of
FELICIA HEMANS;
Whose character is best pourtrayed
in her writings.
She died in Dublin, May 16, 1835,
Aged 41."

CHAPTER XVII.

A.D. 1835.—PART III.

THE POETESSES.

Felicia-Dorothea Hemans.

"If my soul's utterance hath by Thee been fraught
With an awakening power, if thou hast made,
Like the winged seed, the breathings of my thought,
And by the swift winds bid them be conveyed
To lands of other lays, and there become
Native as early melodies of home:
I bless Thee, oh, my God!" *

FELICIA-DOROTHEA HEMANS.

THE character drawn of Mrs. Hemans by Mary-Jane Jewsbury is obviously true:

"Egeria was totally different from any other woman I had ever seen either in Italy or England. She did not dazzle, she subdued me. Other women might be more commanding, more versatile, more acute; but I never saw one so exquisitely feminine. She was lovely without being beautiful; her movements were features; and if a blind man had been privileged to pass his hand over the silken length of hair—that when unbraided flowed round her like a veil, he would have been justified in expecting softness, and a love of softness, beauty, and a perception of beauty, to be distinctive traits of her mind. Nor would he

* 'A Poet's Dying Hymn,' by Mrs. Hemans, stanza v.

have been deceived. Her birth, her education, but, above all, the genius with which she was gifted, combined to inspire a passion for the ethereal, the tender, the imaginative, the heroic, in one word, the beautiful. It was in her a faculty divine, and yet of daily life, it touched all things; but, like a sunbeam, touched them with a golden finger. Anything abstract or scientific was unintelligible and distasteful to her; her knowledge was extensive and various; but, true to the first principle of her nature, it was poetry that she sought in history, scenery, character, and religious belief—poetry that guided all her studies, governed all her thoughts, coloured all her conversation. Her nature was at once simple and profound; there was no room in her mind for philosophy, or in her heart for ambition; one was filled by imagination, the other engrossed by tenderness. Her strength and her weakness alike lay in her affections: these would sometimes make her weep at a word, at others imbue her with courage, so that she was alternately a falcon-hearted dove, and a reed shaken with the wind. Her voice was a sad sweet melody; her spirits reminded me of an old poet's description of the orange-tree with its

'Golden lamps hid in a night of green,'

or of those Spanish gardens, where the pomegranate grows beside the cypress. Her gladness was like a burst of sunlight; and if in her depression she resembled night, it was night wearing her stars. I might describe and describe for ever, I should never succeed in pourtraying Egeria; she was a muse, a grace, a variable child—a dependent woman—the Italy of human beings."*

This spirited and able delineation requires a brief and qualifying commentary upon two of its sentences.

* 'The Three Histories.'

"Anything abstract or scientific was unintelligible and distasteful to her: her knowledge was extensive and various, but it was poetry that she sought in history," &c. . . . . "There was no room in her mind for philosophy, nor in her heart for ambition: the one was filled by imagination, the other engrossed by tenderness."

To use a comparison of Pascal's, the antitheses in these sentences resemble blank windows stuck in for uniformity: there is no real opposition in the first and last clauses of either proposition. That there was no room in the mind of Mrs. Hemans for philosophy because it was filled with imagination is certainly a mistaken assertion; for her imagination, in the form of poetry, was itself intuitive philosophy. Truth could scarcely be announced before her mind had fully penetrated and seized upon it: though for discursive reasoning, the deduction of conclusions from the application of principles to facts, she had little ability. The general tenor of her writings was, in truth, philosophical, serving more or less to illustrate the adaptation of external nature to the intellectual and moral constitution of man.

Had her mind been directed, and studiously bent in youth upon the works of Lord Bacon and Bishop Butler, and even upon the elementary propositions of Euclid, it would probably have gained an equipoise conducive both to intellectual and moral strength.

The poetical life of Mrs. Hemans divides itself into four periods.

First. The juvenile: including the earliest efforts of her childhood, with the imitative and prelusive strains in various styles, chiefly chivalrous, which she poured forth during the spring-time of her existence.

Second. The classic: when her taste being refined and

set by the pure models of ancient Greece, her natural utterance was in some degree constrained and chilled.

Third. The romantic: when, retaining all the correctness of classic types, the exuberant richness of her imagination burst forth, like luxuriant vines overrunning trellis-work; and her sadness gave to every glowing object a tinge of its own hue.

Fourth. Her mature style: when the foliage, buds, and flowers of the preceding periods gave way to fruitage, golden fruitage, more beautiful, and far more precious. Her world-wide sympathies, mental interests, home affections, and heart-wearing sorrows being all supplanted, absorbed, or etherialized by the increase of Divine knowledge and love.

Even if Mrs. Hemans had not survived the second of these periods, she would have left an honoured name to posterity. The third was that of her greatest popularity, and by the productions of that period she still continues to be best known to the world at large. In the course of it, and especially while writing the 'Lays of Many Lands,' and some of the numerous poems and songs which followed them, the original style which she had then distinctively formed for herself, ran no little risk of stiffening into mannerism.

The ancient Welsh bards had a series of 'Triads of Embellishments,' derived from the compositions of still more ancient predecessors; and to these triads they resorted as an approved vocabulary of epithets. For instance, the three embellishing names of the wind were "hero of the world," "architect of bad weather," and "assaulter of the hills." The three embellishing names of flowers were "gems of shrubs," "beauties of summer," and "eyes of zephyrs;" and the three embellishing names of herbs, "mantle of summer," "aspect of beauty," and "hall-floor of love."

The invention and combination of epithets is a privilege of true poets in every age. The British poets of the seventeenth century left to their successors a vast though unassorted treasury of original phrases, which gradually became incorporated with the very texture of poetic language, while each of those successors who possessed true genius, framed for himself, and enriched the literary commonwealth with new combinations of words beautiful and valuable in proportion to the minds which sent them forth.

The mind of Mrs. Hemans was unusually fertile in the production of such "embellishing names," and her writings alone would afford a series of greater length than the whole Bardic canon of 'Triads of Embellishment.' When she composed too fast, which her facility in rhyming often tempted her to do, her retentive memory enabled her to supply every momentary lack of expression by one of her favourite phrases, until an appearance of ostentatious enrichment or a sense of palling tautology was produced by the repetition of "golden light," "far blue seas," "willowy form," "wavy hair," "glancing eyes," "radiant wings," and other just and elegant epithets.

It cannot be denied that her style, in its most popular and florid period, was in its general effect monotonous. The monotony, however, resembled woodland scenery, which tires the cursory beholder with superficial sameness, while to the naturalist and the artist, its recesses and interstices, its nooks and crevices, supply endless diversities of minutely delicate and beautiful objects. The more her poems are studied the more various do they appear; shining out like a tuft of moss to a beam of sunshine, words, which seemed casual adjuncts of the cadence of verse, show meanings which attest the most exact and

thoughtful observation. Such is her comparison of the richly tinted centre of a rose to a ruby;* and such the exquisite lines, where

> "Flower-cups close
> To the last whisper of the falling gale."

The idea of flowers shutting their blossoms gently and leisurely for the repose of night is pleasing, but their doing it to the soft music of the subsiding wind is poetical in the highest degree.

One more instance must be adduced in proof of the perfection in which she possessed the faculty of recording clearly intricate natural appearances. It refers to the sky, where—

> "In calm clouds of pearly stillness bright,
> Showers weave with sunshine, and transpierce their slight
> Etherial cradle."

Rambling often, on horseback or on foot, alone and slowly on a fine day, through a country where stately woods, rich fields, and undulating pastures intersected by rivers and streams, varied by wild glens and rocks, slope down from a range of lofty mountains, where human dwellings and human beings are only scattered about and dotted in as apparent accessories to the prospect, where the soaring hawk or rook and the flitting bushbirds alone break the soft silence of beautiful nature; the meaning, the expression which emanates from such scenery must deeply affect the passing beholder. It is not the reflex of the individual's mind, it is not the recurrence of poetic associations, it is the fresh, true whisper coming, like angelic anthems, from God's wonderful works, and serenely celebrating his wisdom, his power, and his goodness. The dull and ignorant feel it, as well as the sensitive and in-

* In 'The Ancestral Song.'

tellectual, although less powerfully; and as they possess less ability to collect and blend together such successive impressions, and to tincture them with the colours of poetic or philosophic reflection, so do they also want even the necessary knowledge of the words which would fitly express them. Nevertheless, aided by experience, they are enabled immediately to recognise that the poetry which bodies forth such etherial emanations is faithful to nature, and utters audibly the mute, inarticulate language of their own inmost hearts.

No English poet, not Thomson, nor Cowper, nor Wordsworth himself, is more conversant with external nature in its minute details than Mrs. Hemans. From

"The deep sound of the ever-pealing seas"

to the petals of a daisy, everything had a voice which she understood.

She declares—

"God hath been with me in the holiness
Of England's mountains. Not in sport alone
I trod their heath flowers, but high thoughts rose up
From the broad shadow of enduring rocks."

That—

"The silence of the hills
Breathes veneration."

Not only single objects but their combinations make choral harmonies for her:—

"Now doth the lake
Darken and flash in rapid interchange
Unto the matin breeze; and the blue mist
Rolls like a furling banner from the brows
Of the forth-gleaming hills."

Her eye and ear had noticed where—

"Profoundly pure
A blue stream rushes through a darker lake."

The voice of Cambria's river scenery haunted her dreams, years after she had left the banks of Clwyd :—

"Oh, Cambrian river! with slow music gliding
By pastoral hills, old woods, and ruined towers;
Now midst thy reeds and golden willows hiding,
Now gleaming forth by some rich bank of flowers."

Many of her poems testify that she had heard—

"A midnight burst
Of forest-sounding music. Every tone
Which the blasts call forth with their harping wings
From gulfs of tossing foliage;"

and—

"A dreamy sound,
A hollow murmur of the dying year
In the deep woods."

To her there came—

"Religious whisperings
And shivery leaf-sounds of the solitude;"

and of—

"The groves
Where every tree hath music of its own."

She had remarked—

"How the green shadows close
Into a rich, clear, summer-darkness round
A luxury of gloom."

She owns—

"Meet playmate for a child, a blessed child,
Is a glad singing stream, heard or unheard,
Singing its melody of happiness
Amidst the reeds, and bounding in free grace
To that sweet chime. With what a sparkling life
It fills the shadowy dingle! Now the wing
Of some low-skimming swallow shakes bright spray
Forth to the sunshine from its dimpled wave;
Now from some pool of crystal darkness deep
The trout springs upward with a showery gleam
And plashing sound of waters. What swift rings
Of mazy insects o'er the shallow tide
Seem, as they glance, to scatter sparks of light
From burnished films! And mark yon silvery line
Of gossamer, so tremulously hung
Across the narrow current, from the tuft
Of hazels to the hoary poplar's bough!

> See in the air's transparence how it waves,
> Quivering and glistening with each faintest gale,
> Yet breaking not: a bridge for fairy shapes,
> How delicate, how wondrous!"

She had heard—

> "In the hush of moonlight hours
> Voices from the folded flowers."
>
> "The poesy that dwells
> Deep in green woods and dells"

was all her own; and she could not depict even a desert wilderness without making the very sands and haze vocal and eloquent.

Her descriptions of natural objects are not ornamental dissertations, but inseparably belong to the human interest of her poems; and her notice of those objects, exhibiting a ceaseless alacrity of observation, presupposes a certain degree of cheerfulness which tends to abate the mournful effect of her poetry.

External nature is for her a standing simile; a background against which the human figures appear in relief; or, perhaps, it may be termed the symphony, the accompaniment, and the voluntary of every subject, carrying it through with a flowing ease and apparent artlessness, like the soft, free sweep of streams through a valley, or of winds over flowers. The perfect accordance of the melody of the versification with the predominating idea of each poem captivates the ear and wins the mind to unresisting sympathy.

Mrs. Hemans never left the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, but her imagination visited and realized every place of which she read, or heard, or saw a picture. Her intimate acquaintance with a mountainous region gave peculiar vividness to descriptions of

> "The glorious land
> Of the white Alps and pine-crowned Apennines
> Along whose shores the sapphire seas expand;"

but in other instances where she had no such assistance, she caught the poetic sentiment of a scene so perfectly as to give the effect of visual knowledge; for a proof of this the reader is referred to 'The Roman Girl's Song,' which seems as if written near Rome while looking at the city.

Wherever her poems may be localized, she peoples them with heroic men, devoted women, and children such as to a poet-mother her own appeared.

Any incident which impressed her, in the course of her reading, incited her to give it a poetic paraphrase; and whenever the theme admitted of expansion, illustration, and the infusion of pathetic interest, she made it thoroughly her own.

She had no particular faculty for narration, and consequently told a short story much better than a long one. Her tales are languid streams, loitering in eddies, and soon merging in lakes; meditative retrospections rather than moving accidents. Nevertheless, they are in their kind unrivalled in beauty. Never, before or since, has so much deep and passionate feeling found utterance so fervid, so tender, and yet so chastened by sober judgment, in the language of poetry.

Her occasional verses have been pronounced by Lord Jeffrey the best in English literature, and that decision none who know them will feel inclined to impugn. The manner in which she generalizes a subject, and sets all its principal attributes at once before the mind would be astonishing if it were not enchanting. Those pieces which relate to hearth and home and to the seasons are more especially admirable.

Her devotional poetry resembles that of Keble, though it is not like his injured by patristic formalities.

No constraint is perceptible in her diction: subservience to metrical rules can only be detected in the occasional want of exact consecutive order in the arrangement of ideas; a want which to immethodical minds only serves to make the flow of words seem more natural and free. Poetic utterance at last became almost as easy to her as ordinary speech; and when discontents had subsided into resignation, and regrets were lost in anticipations; the truth and earnestness of her character, strengthened and sublimated by the wisdom and fervour of piety, imparted fresh force to her genius and gave a sort of seraphic intensity to her poetry.

The assemblage of a painter's works, and their subjection to one comparative survey is the severest test of his ability; and although the formation of judgment upon poetry, even to the most practised critic, is less spontaneous than on painting, the test of present and interpoising comparison is not less trying to the writings of the poet than it is to the pictures of the painter. When the productions of a life are thus brought together, they bear evidence, as it were, with the voices of successive years, to the progressive and predominating tastes, tendencies, and sources of supply. They mark the gradual progress of cultivation and correction, the increase of growth, of strength, and of fertility. They plainly point out each other's faults, while they show the shadows and sunlights of feeling, the rainbow effulgence of genius, and all the various modes of intentional expression and unintentional betrayal by which the gifted spirit manifests its sufferings, its knowledge, and its aspirations.

It would scarcely be possible to scan any equal number of volumes from the pen of a single author and to find fewer grammatical errors than in those of Mrs. Hemans.

Most of those which do occur look like typographical mistakes. The junction of the verb belonging to the third person singular with the pronoun of the second person singular is an anomaly which she occasionally perpetrates for the sake of the sound. Her application of words according to the most rigorous exactness of their meaning is usually irreproachable; but from first to last she has pertinaciously given to the word "mien" a sense previously unauthorised by any standard English writer, although sanctioned by usage in French literature. Moreover, not content with using the word to signify the substantial human face, she, twice in the course of one poem, 'The Secret Tribunal,' bestows it where even personality is wanting:—

> "Peopling the wild and solemn scene
> With forms well suited to its *mien*,"

and describing—

> "One chosen spot of gentler *mien*."

In those peculiar qualities which distinguish the poetry of women from that of men, in the revelation of feminine modes of thought and tones of feeling, in fine and minutely delicate observation, tender pathos, deep affection, and sublimely blended purity and piety, she excelled all preceding authoresses. Of a mother's protecting and self-sacrificing fondness, of the endeared attachment of the sister, the grateful devotedness of the daughter, the loving faithfulness of the wife, of genial sympathy with human nature in all its forms of being and suffering, of subjection to every passing change in the sky, the air, the earth, and human aspect, blended with the conscious independence of a hidden life for immortality, never before had such an eloquent exponent arisen.

THE DIAL OF FLOWERS.

"'Twas a lovely thought to mark the hours
As they floated in light away,
By the opening and the folding flowers
That laugh to the summer's day.

Thus had each moment its own rich hue,
And its graceful cup and bell,
In whose coloured vase might sleep the dew,
Like a pearl in an ocean shell.

To such sweet signs might the time have flowed
In a golden current on,
Ere from the garden, man's first abode,
The glorious guests were gone.

So might the days have been brightly told,
Those days of song and dreams,
When shepherds gathered their flocks of old
By the blue Arcadian streams.

So, in those isles of delight that rest
Far off in a breezeless main,
Which many a bark with a weary quest
Has sought, but still in vain.

Yet is not life, in its real flight,
Marked thus, even thus, on earth,
By the closing of one hope's delight,
And another's gentle birth?

Oh! let us live, so that flower by flower,
Shutting in turn may leave,
A lingerer still for the sunset hour,
A charm for the shaded eve!"

Dr. Lindley in his 'Botany' gives a 'Watch of Flora,' prepared from the records of Linnæus for Upsal, and from those of De Candolle for Paris. It comprises forty-five plants, begins with the Convolvulus nil and sepium, which open their flowers near Paris at from 3 to 4 A.M.; and ends with the Convolvulus purpureus, which opens its flowers at 10 P.M.

Between these extremes rank some whole genera and many species of other genera.

It appears from this 'Watch' that no flower indigenous to Europe opens either at Paris or Upsal at noon. The

common Ornithogalum umbellatum takes its French name from its hour of expansion—Dame d'onze heures.

'Flora's Horologe,' by Charlotte Smith, may be compared with 'The Dial of Flowers' by turning to page 226. The subject is the same, the treatment as different as it could possibly receive from two feminine minds. Considered merely as a graceful descriptive poem, the 'Horologe' deserves to be preferred for the more familiar and exact knowledge which it evinces of the habits of flowers, and for the skilful ease with which it sets their brilliant images in succession before the reader's mind. In 'The Dial,' the mere fact that flowers were thus used is seized upon without any particular notice of their names or forms. The mind of Mrs. Hemans, on the contrary, takes a wide survey of Eden, Arcadia, and the unfound Islands of the Blessed, fastening at last upon the analogies of the flowers with the joys and sorrows of human life, and drawing a religious moral from their transitory beauty.

To those who, after having spent their youth in rural retirement, find their subsequent lot to be cast amid the busy haunts of active life, the following natural, truthful, and beautiful sonnet will be peculiarly soothing, as a musical echo of their own meditations.

TO THE SKY.

"Far from the rustlings of the poplar bough,
Which o'er my opening life wild music made,
Far from the green hills with their heathery glow,
And flashing streams whereby my childhood played;
In the dim city, 'midst the sounding flow
Of restless life, to thee, I love to turn,
Oh, thou rich sky! and from thy splendours learn
How song-birds come and part, flowers wane and blow.
With thee all shapes of glory find their home,
And thou hast taught me well, majestic dome!
By stars, by sunsets, by soft clouds which rove
Thy blue expanse, or sleep in silvery rest,
That nature's God hath left no spot unblest
With founts of beauty for the eye of love."

The writer of the present essay has not met with any printed statement of the successive editions through which the separate publications of Mrs. Hemans have passed. An advertisement of Messrs. Blackwood for 1860, shows that four different editions of her collected 'Works' continue on sale. Until the copyrights have run out, a just estimate can scarcely be made of the hold those 'Works' have taken upon public favour: so many would gladly buy a part, who cannot conveniently afford to buy the whole, even in their least expensive form, that a new era of wide popular circulation probably awaits the favourite poems.

In the best extant edition, the poems are rather put together than arranged: annotations follow poems to which they do not belong, and the general index is defective. The collections of various dates from magazines, musical depositaries, annuals, and other sources, under the general titles of 'Miscellaneous Poems' and 'Miscellaneous Pieces' require sorting. Those which are on subjects to which Mrs. Hemans had already given specific names, should be designated second and successive series of such subjects. The rest ought to be divided under headings descriptive of their respective bearing, such as 'Poems suggested by Sound, the Wind, Music, &c.;' 'Poems suggested by Pictures,' 'Poems suggested by Sculpture,' 'Poems addressed to Persons,' 'Monodies.'

Machiavelli, in his 'Reflections on Livy,' remarks:—"I have often thought that the cause of every man's success in life is due to the adaptation of his mind to the times in which he lives." * This may with equal propriety be asserted of books; and the proposition in an enlarged form is likewise indisputable,—that the adaptation of books to those principles of human nature which continue

* Bohn's Translated Edition.

unchanged throughout the fluctuations of ages will render them permanently acceptable. The writings of Mrs. Hemans met with immediate and extensive popularity, alike in the most distant and alienated colonial settlements and in the old home of the British race. Their suitability to more than one condition of social life has thus been manifested. Their writer died more than a quarter of a century ago, and many of them have now been more than forty years before the public in undiminished favour. These are good auguries. Perhaps when the century has run its course, and a critical reviewer, like a gardener at the breaking up of winter, examines the ground and sorts out surviving plants from those which have perished in the frost of time, two-thirds of those produced by Mrs. Hemans will be found to possess perennial vitality.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE POETESSES.

A.D. 1838. OCTOBER.

Lætitia-Elizabeth Landon.

"We might have been! These are but common words;
And yet they make the sum of life's bewailing;
They are the echo of those finer chords,
Whose music life deplores when unavailing:
We might have been!"*

LÆTITIA-ELIZABETH LANDON.

EARLY in the eighteenth century, Sir William Landon, Knight, possessed patrimonial estates in the county of Hereford. He speculated in the South Sea scheme, and was ruined by it. His son, the Rev. John Landon, held the rectories of Nursted and Ilsted in Kent, and distinguished himself by writing against dissenters from the Church of England.

The Rev. John Landon's son bore the same name and designation, and held the rectory of Tedstone-Delamere.

John, the eldest son of this last rector, went to sea when a boy, with Admiral Bowyer, and visited the African coast. On the death of the admiral, Mr. John Landon retired from the naval service, and subsequently became a partner in the prosperous firm of Adair and Co., army agents, in Pall Mall. He married Catherine-Jane Bishop, a gentle-

* 'Life and Literary Remains of L. E. L.,' vol. ii. p. 248.

woman of Welsh extraction, and took up his abode at the house in Hans Place, Chelsea, which in 1839 was known as number 25. Lætitia-Elizabeth Landon, their eldest child, was born there on the 14th of August, 1802. They had a younger daughter, who died at the age of twelve years, and an only son, the Rev. Whittington-Henry Landon, who was Lætitia's almost inseparable companion and friend. She was remarkable in early childhood for ardent affections, self-sacrificing generosity, an impetuous temper, and an excessive predilection for books. In her sixth year she attended, as a day scholar, at a school kept by a Miss Rawdon, No. 22, Hans Place. Her father unfortunately inherited his knightly ancestor's turn for speculation, and practised model agriculture at Coventry farm on the borders of Hertfordshire. His family, including Lætitia, occasionally accompanied him thither, but she never lived in the country until she was seven years old, when he removed his home to Trevor Park, East Barnet, where a cousin, called Miss Landon, resided with them, and became the gentle teacher of the eccentric child, whose quickness of apprehension, retentive memory, and keen sagacity, excited her admiration. No sooner had Lætitia conquered the difficulties of mechanical initiation than she entered eagerly upon the acquisition of knowledge.

She learned French with facility, but found the art of penmanship almost unattainable, and never could write a good hand. Her attempts to become a good pianoforte player utterly failed; yet she always loved music, and its sounds, both vocal and instrumental, acted as an invocation to her poetic faculty. Her course of reading in childhood was carefully directed, and limited to history and biography; and novels were strictly prohibited. Nevertheless, her brother recollects that he and his sister read together by

stealth during their childhood not less than a hundred and fifty volumes of 'Cooke's Poets and Novelists,' besides other books of the same sort, a proof of negligent oversight in the governess, and of habitual deceptiveness in the pupil.

The restriction in this case was injudicious; and its ill effects may serve as a warning to those persons who undertake the heavy responsibility of training a child of genius. Her appetite for books became voracious and indiscriminating, and as long as she lived it never knew satiety. Her spirits were lively, and she shared with alacrity her brother's boyish sports, becoming expert at trap-ball, hoop, and archery; nor was she unsuccessful in donkey riding and donkey racing. In other moods of mind, she would walk up and down in the garden, or pace the lime-tree walk for hours together in silent thoughtfulness, and at night reveal the subject of her reveries in long stories of imaginary adventures. She learned, of her own accord, long poems by heart, and Scott's 'Lady of the Lake' was among her dearest favourites. All her inventive fancies required speedy utterance, and she often found difficulty in procuring a patient listener. She used, therefore, to bribe her brother with gifts to attend to her rhapsodies and recitations, and he, being a dull boy, endured her eloquent sallies merely for the sake of some ulterior enjoyment better suited to his taste. The attachment which subsisted between them was, however, perfect in its kind, and so great in its degree, that their father learned by experience when either of them was found guilty of a fault, that the most efficacious way of producing penitence in the culprit was by subjecting the boy to punishment for the offences of the girl, and the girl for those of the boy.

The travels of her cousin, Captain Landon, in America,

formed the subject of her earliest written composition. Her second was a sketch of the character of Sir John Doyle, suggested by reading an account of the Peninsular war.

Her father's reminiscences of Africa, the perusal of a book which he gave her, entitled 'Silvester Tramper,' and of 'Robinson Crusoe,' stimulated and directed her mind in framing fictions of adventurous enterprise, and the 'Arabian Nights' widened her range of illusive pleasures. 'Cook's Voyages' also she greatly delighted in, and she tried to realise his discoveries, in miniature forms, in a punt upon the pond.

In childhood, certainly, she desired to be what she admired, and to exemplify her highest imaginings. Excepting the surreptitious perusal of prohibited books, no element of falsehood appears in the descriptions which her brother and cousin have given of her early character, though such an imputation may covertly lurk in her father's playful remark upon the incompleteness of his children's imitation of Spartan character, that thieving was unpractised only because they chanced not to be in an enemy's country.* Now, as the youth of Sparta practised theft with the especial purpose of perfecting themselves in guile, theft and guile in this case may be considered as counterparts, and while exonerated from the acts, the little Landons were given credit for the disposition to commit them.

Lewis states, in the preface to his 'Life of Goëthe,' that after having embodied the poet's 'Autobiography' in his first volume, he "found it indispensable to recast the whole, and begin again upon a different principle." "Thus," he adds, "the Autobiography came to be treated only as one of the various sources from which the story was constructed. The main reason of this was the abiding inaccuracy of *tone*,

* See Blanchard's 'Life and Literary Remains of L. E. L.,' vol. i.

which, far more misleading than the many inaccuracies of fact, gives to the whole youthful period, as narrated by him, an aspect so directly contrary to what is given by contemporary evidence, especially his own letters, that an attempt to reconcile the contradiction is futile." *

A curious parallel to this passage may be found in the case of Lætitia-Elizabeth Landon, whose 'History of a Child,' written in 1836, and avowedly intended to record her own experience, represents her as a shy, melancholy, lonely, and unloved little creature, acutely sensitive of pain from every casual look or trivial word, and finding a sort of solace in deeming herself a victim. Such a child, her brother and other early friends distinctly testify that she was not. The cousin who was her instructress declares that her temper was cheerful and kind; that a word or a look of admonition would control her fits of passion and produce penitent submission; and that she was tenderly beloved and cared for. These conflicting statements Mr. Blanchard thinks irreconcilable, and consequently he regards 'The History of a Child' as a mere romance.

In this judgment, perhaps, he errs, for it seems probable, if a one-sided view of the subject be taken, that she so far wrote the truth. None but herself could know the keenness of her sensations in her peculiar moods of mind; and the exaggerated record, unbalanced by a proper estimate of accompanying outward facts, might seem,—to persons of ordinary capacity and equable feelings, who were cognizant only with those facts, and had no sympathetic knowledge of the temperament of genius,—to treat of unrealities.

In the year 1815, Mr. John Landon removed with his wife and children to Lewis Place, Fulham, where they

* Vol. i. pp. 9, 10.

remained only twelve months, and then settled at Old Brompton.

Her brother testifies that "up to the age of thirteen, when the family quitted Trevor Park, she was a strong, healthy child, a joyous and high-spirited romp. Nor was this disposition ever wholly lost. When, indeed, thought began to deepen, and the imagination to unfold, it changed into the milder and less childish form of playful wit and social cheerfulness."*

Poetry and romance now absorbed her mental interests, and paternal approbation awakened the ambition of public celebrity. Mr. Jerdan, then editor of 'The Literary Gazette,' was a neighbour; an introduction to him was obtained, and her crude fragments of original prose and verse were submitted to his critical examination. He discerned in them the offshoots of true poetic life, encouraged her to persevere in the cultivation of the art which she supremely loved, and gave several of her juvenile pieces publicity in his weekly paper. She composed and rhymed with facility; her mind was full of facts; similies sprung up from every object of sight; and the cadences of verse seemed almost as natural to her as ordinary speech.

She knew that her father's agricultural speculations had been unsuccessful; that her brother needed a well-filled purse to pursue a University course, and that the conveniences and comforts of her parents' home were painfully diminished. These considerations, and the strong resolve she made to become personally independent, added powerful incentives to industry, and mingled mercenary calculations with imaginative conceptions. In general, the young are protected and screened by their friends from the necessity of struggling against adverse fortune; but

* Blanchard's 'Life and Literary Remains,' vol. i.

there are emergencies, where, standing exposed and solitary, they are forced to brave the blast, and to shield their natural defenders; and such, unfortunately, was her position.

It does not appear that she ever slept from beneath her parental roof until she was eighteen years of age. Family troubles having then reached their crisis, she was sent on a long visit to some of her relations at Clifton; and from thence she accompanied her grandmother into Gloucestershire, and, returning with her to London, remained for a time with her in Sloane Street.

In the year 1821, she published a volume containing 'The Fate of Adelaide' with minor poems, which she dedicated to Mrs. Siddons. In the same year she commenced the series of 'Poetical Sketches' in the 'Literary Gazette,' to which she affixed the signature of L. E. L. They attained extraordinary popularity alike with the old and with the young; for, notwithstanding the distrustful views of life which they shadowed forth, the melancholy forebodings with which they abounded, the weariness and despondency of baffled hopes and blighted affections which they expressed, there breathed in them such buoyant freshness, such careless grace, such vehement and youthful feeling, that their picturesque, chivalrous, and beautiful imagery touched the poetic nerve in every heart, and touching thrilled it.

In 1824, she published 'The Improvisatrice, and other Poems,' which met with great success. Several editions of this volume were rapidly sold, and fame and fortune gave propitious omens. Of 'The Improvisatrice,' Mr. Laman Blanchard has felicitously remarked, in alluding to the crowded imagery, that Miss Landon "destroyed the effect of a fine thought by profusely heaping others upon it, until she buried her nightingale in roses." One might, not un-

reasonably, suppose that the authoress of such a composition had never read any poem, and poured out, in unpremeditated melody, what she scarcely knew to be one.

A strange anomaly must now be noticed. Her chosen biographer declares:—

"There was not the remotest connection or affinity, nor indeed a colour of resemblance between her every-day life or habitual feelings, and the shapes they were made to assume in her poetry. No two persons could be less like each other in all that related to the contemplation of the actual world, than L. E. L. and Lætitia-Elizabeth Landon. . . . . The pen once out of her hand, there was no more sturdy questioner, not to say repudiator, of her own doctrines than her own practice . . . . . Five minutes after the composition of some poem full of passionate sorrow or bitter disappointment and reproach, she would be seen again in the very mood out of which she had been carried by the poetic frenzy that had seized her—a state of mind the most frank, affectionate, and enjoying; self-relying, but equally willing to share in the simple amusements that might be presented, or to employ its own resources for the entertainment of others." *

A few pages farther on, continuing the subject, Mr. Blanchard asserts:—

"That she less frequently aimed at expressing in her poetry her own actual feelings and opinions, than at assuming a character for the sake of a certain kind of effect, and throwing her thickly-thronging ideas together with the most passionate force. Sorrow and suspicion, pining regrets for the past, anguish for the present, and morbid predictions for the future, were, in L. E. L., not moral characteristics, but merely literary resources." †

* See the 'Life and Literary Remains of L.E.L.,' vol. i., pp. 34-5. † Ib. p. 38.

Hence it appears, that just as in writing the part of any particular dramatic personage, feigned sentiments are allotted in conformity with the assigned character, so L. E. L. composed poetry in accordance with her own idea of a poetess. While doing this, however, it surely must be believed that impersonation wrought her up for the time to fervid intensity of feeling. Her mind resembled a stormy sky, where the upper and lower strata of clouds are impelled in opposite directions; for under her most lofty and beautiful conceptions passed the counter-current of derisive scepticism.

Her father had involved himself in pecuniary embarrassments, which brought distress and poverty upon himself and family. His health and spirits gave way under the effects of his imprudence, and in 1825 he died. His daughter had loved him enthusiastically; to please him had been from infancy the first object of her existence, and his death was long a source to her of deep and poignant sorrow.

The concluding lines of 'The Troubadour' are a fervent tribute to his memory. This poem with 'Poetical Sketches of Modern Pictures, and Historical Sketches,' was published in July, 1825. 'The Troubadour' is founded upon the story of the festival of the Golden Violet, instituted at Toulouse in the fourteenth century. The subject and its historic associations gave scope to her chivalrous prepossessions. Describing a poet, or rather her own idea of a poet, she says, that he

> "But dreams a dream of life and light,
> And grasps the rainbow that appears
> Afar all beautiful and bright,
> And finds it only formed of tears."

The recent death of Lord Byron had strongly impressed upon her mind the unsatisfying nature of a poet's rewards.

In old age, the flush of joy or transient animation will sometimes recall for a moment and reveal to a third generation the beauty of a grandmother which, half a century ago, enkindled the admiration of contemporaries. In youth the altered aspect of the countenance under the casual pressure of fatigue or illness, foreshows, in like manner, the change which time and care will in after years render permanent. Thus was it with the mind of L. E. L. She did not indeed live to grow old, but, unhappily, she lived to experience an analogous mental and moral change; the fitful and humoursome sadness of her youth settling at last into a gloom, only broken by flashing outbursts of her primal gaiety. One of her father's brothers, the Rev. Whittington Landon, having made for himself powerful friends at Oxford, became Provost of Worcester College in that University, held the office for thirty years, and was subsequently raised to the Deanery of Exeter. This uncle was endeared to Lætitia-Elizabeth Landon by the essential services which he rendered to her beloved brother in providing him with the means of prosecuting his studies at Oxford.

With another of her father's brothers, the Rev. James Landon, Incumbent of Aberford near Wetherby in Yorkshire, L. E. L. spent the Christmas of that year, and had the advantage of becoming familiarized with the home habits of a well trained and well informed circle of kinswomen.

The success of her 'Troubadour' and 'Sketches' exceeded her most sanguine expectations; and the profits of this volume, as of all her other productions, she dispensed with an ungrudging and liberal hand, among those members of her family who stood most in need of money: reserving to herself only a bare sufficiency for her maintenance. The gladness of literary triumph was painfully counteracted

by the promulgation at this time of calumnies which haunted and troubled her whole future life. Popularity was the idol of her heart; to be admired and beloved was her prevalent desire. Open, frank, and free in manner, she disregarded too daringly the ordinary formalities of social life. Warmly grateful for every act of kindness shown to her, unwilling to believe any evil of persons who had really befriended her, and conscious of innocence, she found with scornful astonishment that her character was traduced, and she imprudently and indignantly refused to give up those intimacies which exposed her to censure, and to alter the habits which provoked animosity. Her impulsive and incautious nature, when unrestrained by affection or the wish to please, led her to utter freely her impressions of people and of things: she talked at random in mixed company, meant no harm, suspected none, and kept neither watch nor ward against invidious observers. Her home at this period, and for several following years, was in Hans Place, at the house of Miss Rawdon, her former governess, with whom she lodged as a parlour boarder, until Miss Rawdon, having married the Comte de St. Quentin, at last accompanied him to France. L. E. L. then became the inmate of the Miss Lances, who carried on the school.

She spent a great part of every day in reading; seldom with any direct and studious purpose, although much of the material acquired for mere amusement was afterwards wrought up in verse, or brought to bear upon her prose criticisms. She had a desultory but wide acquaintance with French and Italian literature, and read many German books.

In the autumn of 1826, she again stayed at Aberford for some weeks, and also at Biggleswade in Bedfordshire. During this period she was occupied in preparing another

volume of poems for the press; and besides her regular contribution of stanzas to 'The Literary Gazette,' she supplied also critical reviews to that periodical. Nevertheless, the stillness and uniformity of country life oppressed her spirits; and writing to a friend, she declared her strong partiality for London as a dwelling-place, in the vivacious words—"Well, give me a metropolitan £500 a year, in preference to a rural £5000." In December, 1826, she published her 'Golden Violet,' 'Erinna,' and some other poetical pieces, in one volume, which like its predecessors, met with immediate and great success.

She had been acquainted from childhood with Dr. Anthony-Todd Thomson and his family. His house was long her favourite place of social resort, and she found in Mrs. Thomson not only an intellectual associate, but a discreet adviser and a most kind friend. In the year 1828 she became intimate with Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall; and visiting often at their house, soon found her social circle advantageously enlarged. In one memorable evening, she met there, and saw for the first time, William Wordsworth, Allan Cunningham, Miss Edgeworth, Mrs. Jameson, and other celebrated persons. Her biographer, Mr. Laman Blanchard, describes her as delighting in lively conversation—"running on from subject to subject, and lighting upon each with a wit never illnatured and often brilliant, scattering opinions as thick as hail,—opinions as wild as the winds, defying fair argument to keep pace with her, and fairly talking herself out of breath."*

Whatever her state of mind might be, her letters were always cheerful, and so was her conversation; for the same desire to attract attention and to please, which rendered her elaborate compositions mournful, tended to enliven

* See Blanchard's 'Life and Literary Remains of L. E. L.,' vol. i.

her social communications. Like a Toledo sword, which is curved in its scabbard and straight when drawn, her mind took different forms in vigorous action and at rest.

Her disposition was social, and she enjoyed all sociable amusements for the sake of merry companionship, as well as for that of the exhilaration and excitement produced by bodily exercise. She was very fond of dancing, took great delight in witnessing theatrical representations; but to all other enjoyments preferred that of talking, in which the roving of her imagination seemed as wild and unconstrained as in dreams or in a waking reverie, excepting only that the wish to surprise and please guided in some degree its irregular and meteoric forces. She always chose her home among the good and prudent, never allowed her immethodical habits to disturb their systematic punctuality, and conformed to their rule in attending divine service at church every Sunday.

In 1829, she published 'The Venetian Bracelet, the Lost Pleiad, the History of the Lyre, and Other Poems,' in one volume, which obtained great success, and sustained her literary reputation.

About this period she wrote many pieces for 'The Literary Souvenir,' for 'The Forget me Not,' and other annuals.

In 1830, she again spent several weeks with her relations at Aberford, keeping up, wherever she might be, her habit of miscellaneous reading, and never remitting that assiduous application which mental fertility rendered agreeable, and the necessities of her nearest kinsfolk enforced.

In the year 1831, she published her first novel, 'Romance and Reality,' and it was well received by the public.

In the same year her 'Thirty Poems,' illustrative of as many engravings, were published in 'Fisher's Drawing-

room Scrap-book.' So successfully did she accomplish this task, that the book, instead of remaining, as at first intended, a solitary volume, became the first of an annual series, which she continued to supply with her productions for eight successive years, among those productions being some of her sweetest poems.

In 1832, still carrying on her previous literary engagements, she became a contributor to 'The New Monthly Magazine,' and also wrote 'Twelve Pieces,' illustrative of engravings in 'The Easter Gift, a Religious Offering.'

In 1834, she published her clever but baneful novel, 'Francesca Carrara,' a proof of great but ill-directed mental power. In the course of the same year she accompanied Sir A. Farquhar and his daughter to Paris, where she spent several weeks, seeing all that great city has to show, and enjoying society which afforded exercise for her darling occupation among the most eminent proficients in the world of the art of talking.

Towards the close of this year she furnished the illustrative text for a volume of Akerman's 'Flowers of Loveliness,' and edited a volume of Heath's 'Book of Beauty.'

In the year 1835, a view of Maclise's celebrated picture called 'The Vow of the Peacock,' suggested to her mind a 'Lay' on the same subject. This poem, with several others to make up a volume, she published in the autumn of the same year, and to it was prefixed an engraving from the portrait taken of her by the same painter whose inventive and artistic skill had prompted her own. These poems received from the public an enthusiastic welcome. About this period she entered into a matrimonial engagement with a literary man, for whom she entertained a high esteem. Thinking it due to him to trace out her calumniators and to obtain a distinct refutation of the slanderous

reports which had long ago been circulated—in 1836, L. E. L. entered with a hopeful spirit upon the painful investigation; but convinced at last that voice is invisible and echo intangible, that defamation, like fire-works, once let off must blaze and spread, and crackle until self-exhaustion, her heart sunk, her health gave way, and in an agony of suffering she renounced the engagement.

Never remitting her literary toils, she continued occasionally her contributions to 'The Literary Gazette,' regularly supplied 'The Court Journal' for three years with articles in prose or verse, and sent some of her choicest poetry to 'The New Monthly Magazine.'

In the same year she began to write for Schloss's 'Fairy Almanac,' published her 'Traits and Trials of Early Life,' and also her best prose work, the celebrated novel called 'Ethel Churchill.'

In the autumn of the same year she first became acquainted with Mr. George Maclean, Governor of Cape Coast Castle. His connection with Africa, the land of her juvenile prepossessions, gave him at once a strong claim upon her interest, and inclined her to encourage his addresses.

In May, 1837, appeared her 'Birth-day Tribute to the Princess Victoria.'

Mrs. Sheldon having succeeded the Miss Lances in their school, L. E. L. remained with her in Hans Place, and in the course of this year removed with her to Upper Berkeley Street. From thence, after a residence of a few months, she went as a guest to the house of a friend in Hyde Park Street; and, various impediments to the union being at length overcome, she was married, at the church of St. Mary in Bryanstone Square, to Mr. George Maclean, on the 7th of June, 1838, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton

giving her away, and her brother, the Rev. Whittington-Henry Landon, performing the ceremony.

"How deeply shall I value praise when I am away!" was one of her last sayings to her brother, on the last morning she spent in England. "What will you do without friends to talk to?" was one of the last questions he ever put to her. Both these sentences convey significant indications of character.

On the 5th of July, 1838, accompanied by her husband, she embarked and set sail from Portsmouth on board the ship 'Maclean,' bound for Cape Coast.

The wish to be admired and loved being with her a prevalent motive, and the pleasure of pleasing the keenest of her enjoyments, slander shocked her to the utmost, as a direct contravention of her most intense desires. It embittered the world to her, and rendered life distasteful: all her small remainder of happiness being concentrated in public applause and the commendation of her dearest friends. She seems to have thought that when away from England none but pleasant reverberations would reach her, and does not seem to have sufficiently weighed her own capabilities for enduring a monotonous life of almost total solitude.

On the voyage she wrote 'The Polar Star' and 'The Night at Sea.' On the 16th of August she landed at her new home, Cape Coast Castle. There she industriously and incessantly occupied herself with household cares and literary work, attending sedulously to her husband's comfort, writing long letters to her friends in England, retouching her 'Female Characters of Scott,' and her tragedy of 'Castruccio Castracani,' and composing the first volume of a new novel, until, on Monday, the 15th of October, 1838, she was found senseless and dying upon the floor of

her bed-chamber, and immediately afterwards expired. An empty phial, which had contained prussic acid, was grasped in her hand; but the cause of her sudden death has never been ascertained.

In childhood she had childhood's faith, praying to a Heavenly Father to bestow and to forgive. Through life she practised the external forms of religion, and had occasionally strong impressions of the exalted and lovely nature of true piety; but the griefs, the cares, and disappointments of life unveiled to her the dark and evil desolation of the human heart, without driving her to seek its Divine remedy. The mystery of human existence ever afterwards appalled her spirit, while flashes of celestial light added horror to darkness, neither illuminating nor dispersing the gloom.

Her character was a mystery as well as her fate. She held certain principles which broadly fenced off right from wrong; but within their barrier she was a reckless despiser of minor morals.

The perversion of aim, and the want of steadfast truthfulness, wrecked at once her happiness and her usefulness. She was sincere, constant, and faithful in her attachments, and she always meant kindly when she spoke so; but the inordinate wish to please so biassed her mind that she would habitually, and without scruple or hesitation, utter pleasing and flattering falsehoods.

The genius of L. E. L. is, perhaps, more out-flashing, and self-relying in its nature, bolder and more fervid in utterance, than that of any other English poetess. So wildly spontaneous do her verses appear that they excite a pleasing wonder by their beauty of diction and their melodious rhythm. Somewhat of the true improvisatrice charm accompanies their flow, poured out as they are in

haste and almost at random. There is, perhaps, something like mechanical propulsion in their force, but the jet d'eau has its beauty as well as the cataract.

Her longest poems show most conspicuously her defectiveness in the art of composition. She could not properly arrange a subject and its accessories, and in trying to work them out made a succession of visible efforts, like an impatient horse breasting the mountain at a gallop.

Her passionate power over words, and success in affecting the feelings of her readers, had induced the belief that she could write a fine tragedy, but her 'Castruccio Castracani' belied her expectation. A good play, whether tragedy or comedy, ought to draw out like a telescope, act developing from act in regular progression; while the dramatic personages should be reflected with the distinctness of a camera. This presupposes methodical construction and deliberate care; the comprehensive realization, by mental forecast, of an harmonious whole, and the accurate preparation and fitting together of its component parts.

With this mechanical exactitude, dramatic composition requires also the exercise of that Protean power which enables an author to assume in turn the nature of every character which he introduces; and tragedy imperatively demands that the spirit of poetry, if not its rhythmic attributes, should imbue and etherialise the whole. None of these requisitions met compliance in the 'Castruccio Castracani' of L. E. L. Elaboration did not belong to her style of workmanship. The mould of her fancy cast out her productions rapidly: the patient chisel was not an implement for her use. She could not work by rule, nor endure any sort of constraint.

Conciseness, clearness, and naturalness being specially

enjoined, she fell of course into diffuseness, obscurity, and distortion. In clipping ordinary language into blank verse, she not only fails to give it rhythm as poetry, but even to make it grammatical as prose. No examples can authorise, no genius sanction such an elliptical construction as omits verbs and nominative cases. There are a few fine thoughts and beautiful lines, but the tragedy as a whole is a poor thing, an utter failure, a mere manifestation of incompetence. It has been plausibly alleged that the subject is wanting in interest for an English audience; but Otway's 'Venice Preserved,' though liable to a similar objection, achieved immense success, and is still a standard on the stage. Without a Belvidera that celebrated tragedy must have failed from the want of the heroic element in its principal personages, Pierre being a villain and Jaffier a waxen thing. The womanly instinct of L. E. L. was not at fault in the choice of a subject; dramatic genius and persevering application might have rendered 'Castruccio' a British favourite, but her conception of the hero's character though fine was inadequate, and feebly wrought out. Some of the situations are advantageous, and might have been made effective: such as his survey of the family portraits in Count Arezzi's hall, and the appearance of Count Leoni in Castruccio's chamber through the secret panel.

One glaring fault this unfortunate tragedy shares with most other plays, and with many novels and romances: the father of the youthful heroine being represented as a weak and worn down old man, although mentioned as having been a blooming youth at the period of her birth. Now, allowing a heroine to be twenty-one years of age, and the father at her birth to have been twenty-four, he must have fallen into a state of premature decrepitude to be

deemed a "lean and slippered pantaloon" at the age of forty-five!

L. E. L., or the editor of her posthumous works, has spelled the name of her tragic hero differently from the way in which Machiavelli, Sismondi, or any other historian within the present critic's range of reading has done. It surely was a mistake to write throughout 'Castruccio Castrucani' for Castruccio Castracani.

In writing reviews of books L. E. L. often threw out very beautiful thoughts, which came like iridescence on the wave.

Opinions have been defined by the greatest of our philosophers to be only "knowledge in the making." Hers never reached the concrete form of judgment: they were often warped by kindness, never by hostility, and always erred on the indulgent side.

The high literary merits of her novels are universally acknowledged, as well as their false views of human life.

Reason and conscience not having due dominion over her soul, ideas and opinions, purposes and cares, fancies, feelings, and impulses, a host of petty tyrants, waywardly swayed both her mind and heart.

Not from analysis, but by a clear and subtle insight, penetrating and revealing at a flash the depths of her poetic nature, she was able to discern and to promulgate many facts relating to that nature, and generally true of women of genius.

Thus, writing of Flora Mac Ivor, she says:—"I believe that the imaginative and the highly-gifted are the least susceptible; when they do love, it is with the depth and the energy to which themselves give strength; but the imagination rarely at first seeks an object where it must de-

pend; it likes to feel its freedom, and its earliest pursuit is usually unselfish and abstract." * This resembles Pascal's thought:—"Les grandes âmes ne sont pas celles qui aiment le plus souvent," &c.

A belief in the enduring value of a poet's enthusiastic affection is likewise a property of that class of women.

> "A poet's love
> Is immortality. The heart whose beat
> Is echoed by the lyre will have its griefs,
> Its tenderness remembered, when each pulse
> Has long been cold and still." †

The last stanza of 'The Awakening of Endymion' expresses another peculiarity of such minds.

> "When every worldly thought is utterly forsaken,
> Comes the starry midnight, felt by life's-gifted few,
> Then will the spirit from its earthly sleep awaken
> To a being more intense, more spiritual and true.
> So doth the soul awaken,
> Like that youth to Night's fair Queen."

This awakening seems to belong rather to the intellect than to the heart, and to fall far short of that divine enlightenment which involves a rectification and renewal of the whole bent and stress of the soul.

Several of her later writings are replete with good feeling. Referring to the sacred poems which she wrote for 'The Easter Offering,' she says:—"They were written in a spirit of the deepest humility, but whose fear is not of this world. . . . . I believe I myself am the better for their existence; I wish their effect may be the same on others. In this hurrying and deceitful world, no page will be written utterly in vain which awakens one earnest or heavenward thought, one hope, or one fear in the human heart."

Her poem entitled 'We Might have Been' is deeply

* 'Female Portrait Gallery, Waverley.' 'Life and Literary Remains,' vol. ii. p. 84.

† 'Minstrel of Portugal.'

touching as an evidence of regret for time and talents misapplied; and the following fragment is still more so.

GIFTS MISUSED.

"Oh! what a waste of feeling and of thought
Have been the imprints on my roll of life!
What worthless hours! To what use have I turned
The golden gifts which are my hope and pride?
My power of song, unto how base a use
Has it been put! With its pure ore, I made
An idol, living only on the breath
Of idol-worshippers. Alas! that ever
Praise should have been what praise has been to me—
The opiate of the mind!" *

The following pieces are more characteristic of her ordinary style.

THE HEART'S OMENS.

"I felt my sorrow ere it came,
As storms are felt on high,
Before a single cloud denote
Their presence in the sky.

The heart has omens deep and true,
That ask no aid from words;
Like viewless music from the harp
With none to wake its chords.

Strange, subtle are these mysteries,
And linked with unknown powers,
Marking mysterious links that bind
The spirit world to ours." †

THE POET'S POWER.

"Oh! never had the poet's lute a hope,
An aim so glorious as it now may have,
In this our social state, where petty cares
And mercenary interests only look
Upon the present's littleness, and shrink
From the bold future, and the stately past—
Where the smooth surface of society
Is polished by deceit, and the warm heart,
With all its kind affection's early flow,
Flung back upon itself, forgets to beat,
At least for others:—'tis the poet's gift
To melt these frozen waters into tears,
By sympathy with sorrows not our own.

* 'Life and Literary Remains,' vol. ii. p. 277. † Ibid. p. 288.

By wakening memory with those mournful notes
Whose music is the thoughts of early years,
When truth was on the lip, and feelings wore
The sweetness and the freshness of the morn.
Young poet, if thy dreams have not such hope
To purify, refine, exalt, subdue,
To touch the selfish and to shame the vain
Out of themselves, by gentle mournfulness,
Or chords that rouse some aim of enterprise
Lofty and pure, and meant for general good;
If thou hast not some power that may direct
The mind from the mean round of daily life,
Waking affections that might else have slept;
Or high resolves, the petrified before;
Or rousing in that mind a finer sense
Of inward and external loveliness,
Making imagination serve as guide
To all of heaven that yet remains on earth,
Thine is a useless lute: break it and die!"*

Soon after her decease, her 'Zenana' and some other poems were published, together with a slight Memoir by Miss Emma Roberts.

In 1841, Mr. Laman Blanchard published 'The Life and Literary remains of L. E. L.,' comprising extracts from her missive letters, her tragedy of 'Castruccio Castrucani, or the Triumph of Luca,' 'The Female Picture Gallery,' 'Subjects for Pictures,' 'Miscellaneous Poems,' 'Fragments,' and 'Fugitive Poems.' In these, as in all her previous works, her fine ideas may be compared to gems of high intrinsic worth, not only ill set, but ill cut, flawed, and scarcely throwing out half their proper brilliancy.

Her works continue to be popular: the fascination of real genius, and the charm which belongs to the spring-flood of feeling are likely to make them so with many generations of English youths and maidens of unsettled principles. Her poems have been collected, and are published in one and in two volumes by Messrs. Longman.

* 'A History of the Lyre.'

Although she was neither a plagiarist nor an imitator, her inspiration is obviously Byronic. The want of consistent truthfulness, and the indulgence of reverie spoilt her fine mind, as dodder spoils the rose.

Abstract thought, directed by intention, is the most laborious, the most profitable, and the most ennobling exercise of the human spirit. It comprehends, and it appropriates, all the benefits derivable from personal observation and experience, from social intercourse, from books, and from every other means of mental, moral, and spiritual instruction. It is also the hallowed vehicle of Divine communion. Reverie is not an act: it is merely a passive state, wherein all the higher faculties, with their agent, common sense, lie dormant; while wayward memory and fugitive sensations sport with the slumbering fancy. A fine mind in reverie is like a bardic harp abandoned and exposed to unskilled hands, wild winds, and casual weather. Yet for a while it utters sweet and powerful tones, but slackening wires, breaking strings, and a decaying frame, too soon foretell approaching ruin. It is a poor excuse for this baneful habit to allege that the current of indulged ideas is innocent, and recreative to a weary mind. Such, doubtless, may often be the case; for the prevalent disposition of the individual will generally be found to influence both the waking and sleeping dreams. But the fact that a powerful horse has now and then with impunity been trusted with the reins upon his neck, would afford no great security for the rider's safety in taking off the bit and bridle, and committing the animal freely to his uncontrolled caprices. No recreations ought to be considered lawful but such as fit us for renewed labour. Reverie therefore, is not allowable. In truth, it is altogether mischievous—destructive to some minds, and injurious to all.

CHAPTER XIX.

A.D. 1838. NOVEMBER.

THE POETESSES.

Anne Grant.

"In youth she was lovely; and Time,
When her rose with the cypress he twined,
Left the heart all the warmth of its prime,
Left her eye all the light of her mind."—CROLY.

ANNE GRANT.

DUNCAN MACVICAR, a Highland gentleman, married in the year 1753 a Stewart of Invernahyle, and changing agricultural occupations for commercial pursuits, took up his residence in the city of Glasgow, where he had many good friends. He was an upright and pious man, with a talent and tendency for money making. His wife was a good and prudent woman, of cheerful disposition, narrow understanding, and notable habits. There was much moral elevation in the characters of both, and the consciousness of their good Celtic blood refined their manners, though it flowed not very warmly through their hearts. Their only child, Anne Macvicar, was born at Glasgow, on the 21st of February, 1755, and nursed in the mountain home of her maternal forefathers until she was eighteen months old. In the year 1757, Duncan Macvicar, having obtained a commission in the 77th Regiment of Foot, went out to

America, leaving his wife and daughter at Glasgow. Mrs. Macvicar some time afterwards received his directions to follow him; and accompanied by their little Anne, she landed at Charleston in the year 1758, and took up her temporary abode at Albany. Mr. Macvicar, having exchanged into the 55th Regiment, and being much trusted by the commandant as a steady and clever man of business, was sent down from head-quarters at Oswego on Lake Ontario to buy stores, with leave of absence to visit his family. On his return, he took his wife and child with him to the garrison, travelling in a boat up the river. He served in the disastrous attack on Ticonderoga, July 8, 1758, when seven of his brother officers were killed. On the declaration of peace between Great Britain and France in 1762, the 55th Regiment was ordered to New York, previous to embarkation for England. The Macvicars returning by the river from Oswego to Albany, became intimate with the celebrated Madame Schuyler, who had then left her mansion on the The Flats, and become a resident in that town. Mr. Macvicar retiring on half-pay from the army in 1765, received a grant of land from Government, and purchased from two of his brother officers the lands which had been also assigned to them. These, lying together, and promising when cleared to become a fertile and profitable estate, Mr. Macvicar employed persons to survey and map them, reasonably expecting that his "Township of Clarendon" would in a few years become a very valuable property. Meanwhile, in order to negotiate with persons desirous of settling on his estate, and to watch the social changes consequent upon the termination of the war, he became the tenant of Madame Schuyler's new house at The Flats, in the township of Claverac, and of a few adjacent acres of land. At this

period of her life, little Anne had two homes, usually spending the summer with her parents, and the winter with Madame Schuyler at Albany. Madame Schuyler became the Minerva of her imagination, and the affections of the energetic child, as well as the varied powers of her active and original mind, grew and flourished under the judicious culture of that wise and excellent woman. Under her inspection, Anne Macvicar became conversant with all the details of a large and well regulated domestic establishment, was trained to habits of orderly arrangement, and to the methodical disposal of time. She daily saw the negroes working at all kinds of trades, and thus became acquainted with the materials used and the processes employed.

She had lived beside vast lakes, magnificent rivers, and primæval forests. She knew by sight and name the different species of fish; when the sturgeons were to be expected, and the manner in which the fishermen followed and caught them by torch-light. She could tell by the altered sounds of the waterfall each coming change of wind and weather. By making incisions in the bark of trees, she could ascertain the points of the compass: the frigid northern blasts always thickening the side exposed to them. She could discern the nature of soils by the vegetation they produced. She was acquainted with the haunts of wild animals, from the deer to the squirrel, from the wolf to the rat.

She knew all the amphibious birds of the Hudson river, from the bald-headed eagle to the curlew; all the water-fowl, from the scarlet-headed duck to the didapper. She had learned their periods of migration and those of the land-birds, the setting forth of their flights at dawn, their noon-day resting-places, and their night shelters. She was familiar with the notes, plumage, and habits of

forty different kinds, and with their several nests and eggs. She also knew the different species of insects, and the different kinds of grain on which they fed.

She had seen the dykes of the beavers, and the lurking holes of the snakes. She had learned the local name, the properties and uses of every tree, shrub, and plant; and which crops might most profitably be raised on each soil, and in succession to each other: that the land where chesnut-trees grow wild is good for wheat; that where the white oak trees grew, the maize would thrive and pastures flourish; that where wild strawberries abound, they betoken a fertile soil.

She had received ocular demonstration of the advantages of commerce, seeing the productions of different countries, and of different parts of the same country exchanged; and had been early initiated in politics by hearing discussions upon the characters and interests of various tribes and nations.

She had lived among Dutch settlers, French Huguenots, English soldiers, negro slaves, and Mohawk Indians. She had learned the language of Holland among her young friends at Albany, and shared their summer recreation of canoeing to the islets, and jaunting in little horse-chairs to the bush. Their winter diversion of sledging down the slope she had refused to partake, but had practised it alone. She had frequented the summer wigwams of the Indians, admired the native dignity of their sachems, and the grave calm courage of the warrior hunters. She could talk their language sufficiently well to make herself understood by those women and children who were accustomed to European intercourse, and she took pleasure in watching the progress of their ingenious handicrafts, their preparation of the birch-wood and bark, and of deer-skins, their

dyeing, and platting, crochet and embroidery, and wood-carving.

All this palpable, visible, and experimental knowledge, Anne Macvicar had amassed by the time that she was ten years of age. Her acquaintance with books at that period was proportionately small. Soon after her arrival in America, she had been taught needlework and the elements of reading by her mother, and a soldier had given her lessons in pot-hooks, hangers, and joining-hand. The family Bible, and a Scotch serjeant's copy of Blind Harry's 'Wallace' were the earliest books to which she had access, and she derived from studying the latter on the banks of Lake Ontario an enthusiastic feeling for Scotland, which lasted through life.

On the voyage back to Albany, from the garrison at Oswego, staying a while at Fort Bruerton, where a company of the 55th Regiment was stationed, Captain Campbell, the commander, pleased with her way of reading, her manifestations of memory, and her unusual quickness of intellect, presented her with an illustrated copy of the 'Paradise Lost,' of which the pictures had charmed her. This, with the aid of a tattered copy of 'Bailey's Dictionary,' she learned at last to understand. It served her in the first instance as a vocabulary, then as a story book, and subsequently as an incentive to all pure, exalted, and poetical aspirations. Ordinary readers, perplexed by the multiplicity of books, are quite unaware of the vast amount of valuable matter which can be squeezed, pressed, extracted, and decocted out of one single book; and never will make the discovery until other resources are cut off.

At Madame Schuyler's, Anne Macvicar became acquainted with Shakspeare, Pope, Addison, and a few other

standard authors. She also took lessons in geography and the use of the globes from the Dutch chaplain. Her principal advantage, however, consisted in oral instructions received from that pious and benevolent woman, and from listening to the conversations held by her monitress with the most cultivated and intelligent of the military officers who filled the highest stations in the colony.

Disgusted with the new settlers, sick of that malady peculiar to the natives of mountain lands, and worn by the pains of rheumatism, brought on by exposure to damp and cold while in the keen pursuit of game, Mr. Macvicar suddenly resolved on returning with his wife and daughter to Scotland. His neighbour, Captain Munro, consented to take charge of the "Township of Clarendon," and with a reasonable expectation of deriving from thence in a few years a competent income, and of securing an ample inheritance for his child, he took a hasty leave of his American friends, embarked, and reappeared in the city of Glasgow in the year 1768. There, among the wealthy and pious inhabitants who were friends of her parents, Anne Macvicar found several amiable girls of her own age, and more especially two sisters named Pagan, afterwards better known as Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Brown, with whom, during the three following years, she cultivated an intimate friendship, productive of mutual improvement and happiness. The change of scene and of circumstances proved to her a marked era in educational progress, and among grave people, old books, and old recollections, in a former stronghold of the Covenanters, her knowledge of history and of piety received large accessions. Her father had again employed himself in commerce, but he resigned that occupation and accepted the appointment of barrack-master at Fort Augustus, in the county of Inverness, in

the year 1773, and immediately removed thither with his family.

There, for six years, Anne Macvicar lived an object of general regard among the families of the military officers, and the inhabitants of the Strathmore, while diligently endeavouring to improve her understanding, and to discipline her will, and practising literary composition in writing letters to her Lowland and other friends, and in occasional sallies of poetry.

The chaplain of Fort Augustus was a young clergyman named Grant, who, in the year 1776, was presented to the neighbouring living of Laggan. He had no fortune, but was a gentleman by birth, and connected with the best families in the county. Handsome, well-informed, refined, and deeply pious, he won Anne Macvicar's heart; and, with the full approval of their respective friends, they were married in May, 1779. Her parents, soon after this event, removed to Fort George, where Mr. Macvicar was appointed barrack-master. Mr. Grant was both mentally and physically of a delicate constitution, his temper was gentle, his disposition reserved and somewhat fastidious, and his strong, cheerful, and affectionate wife became at once and for ever the whole world to him. Their cottage home at Laggan was fifty miles from Perth, and the same distance from Inverness, and these were the nearest towns. They rented a small farm from the Duke of Gordon as an additional source of income, and with the glebe land and clerical stipend rejoiced contentedly in the chosen lot of Agur—"neither poverty nor riches"—though ceaseless and laborious activity on her part was requisite to preserve the equilibrium, the smaller scale being always ready to preponderate.

Soon after her marriage she gratuitously received into

her family Charlotte Grant, a young girl who was her husband's near kinswoman. Mrs. Grant not only treated her with maternal kindness, but made on her the first experiment of that excellent method of moral training and intellectual culture which Mrs. Grant in after years applied so successfully to her own children and to many pupils. The grateful Charlotte amply repaid her benefactress by improving under her instructions, and by the most affectionate and self-denying devotion to her and to her children.

At Laggan Mrs. Grant lived not only, as she expressed it, in "a kind of negative elegance," but in "ease, liberty, and a kind of rough plenty." Nor was she altogether shut out from society. Many of the scattered neighbours were of gentle blood and well bred, had travelled abroad, and collected stores of varied information. Almost every year she managed to get a few weeks' holidays, visited her kinsfolk and acquaintance in different parts of the Strathmore, her parents, and her favourite friends at Glasgow; the good horse, "Paddy," who would draw their four-wheel carriage as willingly as a hay-cart, greatly facilitating these recreative migrations.

The picturesque attire of the Gaelic Celts pleased her fancy, and especially that of the elder women, who, retaining the erect and elastic bearing of their prime, and the freshness of complexion which usually belongs only to youth, with the serenity of countenance peculiar to happy old age, attended Divine service during the winter, with kerchiefed heads, and bodies wrapped in bright-coloured plaid cloaks, each fastened by a circular brooch of polished silver. Their strong family affections, their local and fanciful traditions, their talents for music and poetry, their spontaneous eloquence, their refinement of feeling, and their native courtesy, would have attracted her admiration

had she been a stranger unbound by any ties of consanguinity; and the Highlanders were still further endeared to her as the fellow-countrymen of her parents and their ancestors, of her husband and his clansmen, and of her darling children. Her own earliest footsteps had been set on Highland ground, and the separation during childhood from the land of her race had only enabled her, on returning to it, better to discern, and more clearly to discriminate, their simple and noble characteristics. The power of drawing contrasts seems, under all circumstances, to be absolutely necessary to just estimation; and judgment concurring with affection gives strength and force to national preferences. The Celts were shy of her at first, deeming her a stranger, but they soon learned to love her for her own sake as well as for her husband's.

Writing on the 19th of February, 1821, to Mrs. Hook, of Mr. Grant's Celtic parishioners, she states:—"I was assiduous in learning the language of the country where my lot was thrown. Long days have I knit my stocking, or carried an infant from sheaf to sheaf, sitting and walking by turns in the harvest field, attentively observing conversation, which for the first years of my residence in the Highlands, I was not supposed to understand. Seldom a day passed that I did not find two or three petitioners in the kitchen, respectfully entreating for advice, medicine, or some petty favour. Often I sat down with them and led them to converse, captivated with the strength and beauty of their expressions in their native tongue."

Thus she made herself acquainted with the Gaelic language, and was able not only to speak it with the people, and to understand the religious services which her husband performed in it, but to enter into its poetic beauty, and to translate the compositions both of ancient

and modern bards. Loving and admiring the Highland character, and ever ready to exclaim with Béranger, "La langue, la langue! c'est l'âme des peuples!" She took care that it should be the first language her children spoke, and would not teach them a word of English until they were four or five years old.

According to the Highland custom, detachments of the family were sent to the "summer shealings,"—cottages, or huts in the glens, near the mountain pastures of the milch cows and goats, the sheep and ponies. In charge of trusty servants, several of the children accompanied the dairy migration in order that they might be inured to habits of rural simplicity and hardihood. Beds and furniture were sent with them, and the man who weekly carried home supplies of milk, butter, and cheese fetched provisions from home, and conveyed orders and intelligence. If a new "byre" was wanting on their farm, neighbours must be sent to the oak wood to cut the timber, and Mrs. Grant must supply a sufficient stock of bread and cheese to last them through as many days as the employment would detain them.

Then, two out of her three maid-servants being away at the "shealings," she had to direct and assist the remaining one, not only in taking care of the younger children, and in ordinary household affairs, but in preparing food for twenty people who were busy in the moss, cutting fuel for the use of the house through the winter.

Autumn brought the return of the pastoral people from the glens, reminding her of patriarchal life and the plains of Mamre, and turning her attention to fields of potatoes promising food, and to fields of flax promising linen for her household. The woollen used in her family was grown by her own sheep, and spun, like the flax, by herself and her maidens. There were also the hay and corn harvests,

with joyous harvest-homes; her merry children riding in the returning waggons, or helping to glean for the poor, or watching the formation of the stacks.

When any of the glebe tenants, or labourers, or servants married, she, with a genial heart rejoicing in their joy, would preside at the feast, supply the table plenteously, and at once sanction and control the gaiety of their rural dances.

On Sundays, when the Lord's Supper was administered by Mr. Grant in the parish church, a large and widely scattered congregation attending the lengthened service made tacit demands on Mrs. Grant's hospitality. Many of them were brought to the cottage for refreshment, some of them stayed all night, and the assistant ministers made it for the time their home.

Writing to Mrs. Fletcher on the 26th July, 1820, she remarks:—"I can easily conceive what a tent-preaching in the Highlands would be to you: attire so suited to the scene, devotional feeling quiet from its depth and intenseness, Christians (humble, and therefore real Christians) sitting as it were under the immediate eye of Heaven, and psalmody resounding in the open air to Him whose temple is all space."

Sometimes she had the gratification of receiving her favourite friends under her hospitable cottage-roof, and of entertaining them there for many weeks. Often her liberal hand sent to their habitations presents of game, poultry, and cheese, from her Highland home.

The first great trouble she ever felt was the death of her second son, a child of four years old, gifted with remarkable strength and beauty, and with precocious talents. In a year or two afterwards she also lost twin daughters. Her elder children, two or three at a time, generally

resided with her parents, who, in the year 1794, left Fort George and took a house in the city of Glasgow, where the grandchildren enjoyed many educational advantages.

On the death of a favourite companion of her girlhood, Mrs. Grant took one of the little orphan children of that friend and placed it in her own populous nursery; and Charlotte Grant marrying and dying early, she comforted the desolate widower by taking charge also of her child.

Notwithstanding her manifold avocations, she never neglected to instruct her daughters in needlework, and to practise it herself in all its forms.

"Needlework, good, old, court needlework, is the thing! It exercises fancy, fixes attention, and, by perseverance and excellence in it, habituates the mind to patient application, and to those peaceful and still-life pleasures which form the chief enjoyment of every truly amiable woman." *

Women who scorn, or who affect to scorn, that employment which nature and art mark out as peculiarly their own, do unintentionally declare themselves to possess narrow and ill-balanced minds.

Most justly did she say of herself that she was "full of affection, and loved everything and everybody from the wren to the elephant." She applied that description only to her youth, but it was appropriate all her life long. She had also, as a counterpart, "an inordinate avarice of affection," and the love of pleasing was, perhaps, her foible.

Probationary discipline is always adapted to individual character, and often consists in a series of afflictions alike in kind. It was so in the case of Mrs. Grant. She liked to be in easy circumstances because she delighted in

* 'Letters from the Mountains,' vol. iii. p. 299, ed. 1.

making people comfortable and happy, but her husband and children were the objects of almost adoring love.

The transatlantic estate on which her father had laid out so much money, and bestowed so much toilsome care, fell into the hands of dishonest marauders, was absorbed into the new State of Vermont, and lost to him for ever by the separation of America from Great Britain. With that estate vanished all Mrs. Grant's worldly expectancies and those of her children, yet the loss very slightly affected her. Sorrows of a different kind were destined to humble and to prove her. The death of her amiable and promising eldest son, John-Lauchlan, at the age of fifteen, was a dreadful blow. Its effect was somewhat softened to both parents by the birth of a fourth son a fortnight afterwards, and for eighteen months, although depressed in health and spirits, their domestic happiness was so perfect that Mrs. Grant subsequently declared that, if she were permitted to select six months out of her whole former life to live over again, she would choose the last six of that period. It came to a fearful close: Mr. Grant was attacked by inflammation of the chest, and after three days' illness, dangerous symptoms only becoming apparent to his medical attendant for three hours, and to his wife for thirty minutes, the agonised woman found herself a widow. This occurred in the year 1801; they had been twenty-two years married, and of their twelve children eight survived, six daughters and two sons. Under a grievous sense of her bereavement she put forth all her energy, trusting implicitly that the children of a righteous man would not be allowed to want bread.

Her only certain income was the small pension due to her as the widow of a military chaplain. The Duke of Gordon considerately permitted her to remain the tenant

of his farm for two years after her husband's death. She was also aided by the zealous kindness of many among her family connections and friends. They collected the original verses and translations which she had previously written and given away; sent them to her for revision, and published them under the patronage of the Duchess of Gordon, 3000 names appearing in the list of subscribers.

In June 1803, she reluctantly quitted Laggan with her children, and took up her abode at Woodend near Stirling, having garden-ground attached to her dwelling and a few acres of pasture-land. Her father died in the same year at Glasgow, and her mother, who had a small pension as an officer's widow, came to spend the remainder of her days under the roof of Mrs. Grant.

Twice within the years 1803, 1804, and 1805, maternal duties summoned Mrs. Grant to various parts of England; the last of these visits being to London and its vicinity for the purpose of fitting out her third and eldest surviving son, Duncan James, for India; the Right Honourable Charles Grant having obtained a cadetship for his young clansman. To make a comfortable provision for all her children had now become her chief desire, and to further this object she resolved, at the suggestion of her true friends Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Brown, and others, with whom she had kept up an epistolary correspondence from her girlhood, to publish the letters which they had preserved; and early in the year 1806, under the title of 'Letters from the Mountains,' those utterances of the heart were brought before the public by Messrs. Longman, and met with extraordinary success. She derived from this work, not only large pecuniary profits, but also many invaluable friendships.

While residing at Woodend she took charge of several little boys as boarders, in aid of her scanty means of livelihood, and among them at one time was young Morritt of Rokeby. Sir Henry and Lady Steuart, her nearest neighbours, appreciated her merit and showed her many attentions.

In April 1807, her daughter Charlotte died at the age of seventeen: the first child whom she lost after her widowhood. In the July of the same year, her daughter Catherine died in the twenty-fifth year of her age. Both were remarkable for beauty and intellect, and both passed away in the tranquillity of Christian hope. Grief for these beloved children was mingled with fearful apprehension for the six survivors, as their cases made her fully aware that the insidious malady of their father's family, consumption, was inherited by his children. Nevertheless, with unremitting diligence, she laboured for their temporal welfare.

Having kept alive her American remembrances by comparing them with those of her mother, and having enlarged and corrected these conjoint impressions by reading Colden's 'History of the Indians,' and that part of the 'Travels of the Duke de Rochefoucault-Liancourt in America' which relates his tour from Upper Canada to New York, she fortunately met in London with several near relations of Madame Schuyler, who afforded her the aid of their more accurate knowledge, while she was engaged in finishing the manuscript and correcting the proof-sheets of her 'Memoirs of an American Lady,' which appeared in 1808, and met with a very favourable reception.

It is not to be doubted, although the observation does not seem to have been uttered or to have got into print,

that the 'Letters from the Mountains' were partly indebted for their immediate success to their connection with the birthplace of Macpherson and the race of Ossian. The 'Memoirs of an American Lady,' also, fell into and harmonised with the recollections of many survivors of the American war, and thus in the first instance stole into public favour. Without such introductory circumstances, both works might have failed to excite attention, but, having gained it, their intrinsic merits sufficed to extend and heighten their celebrity. They passed through repeated editions, and were the means of constantly enlarging the circle of her personal friends.

In 1809, the Countess of Glasgow having requested her to take charge of her ladyship's daughter, who was then leaving school, Mrs. Grant was induced to wish for other pupils of a similar kind, whom her daughters might instruct under her own supervision. With this object in view, she took some steps towards removing to London; but considerations of economy causing her eventually to decide on fixing her residence in Edinburgh, she took a house there in Heriot Row, and removed her family thither in March 1810.

In 1811, she published her 'Essays on the Superstition of the Highlands of Scotland, with Translations from the Gaelic.'

Towards the close of the same year, her mother, Mrs. Macvicar, died, in her eighty-fourth year.

The two following years, unmarked by any particular occurrence, were chiefly spent in training the pupils committed to her care.

In 1814, she published a poem entitled 'Eighteen Hundred and Thirteen.'

On the 14th of August, 1814, her son, Lieutenant

Duncan-James Grant, died at Surat, while engaged in military duty, and expecting, from his own good conduct and his mother's interest, a course of rapid promotion.

A few days later, in the same month and year, Mrs. Grant lost her dutiful and amiable daughter Anne. Information of young Duncan's death had not reached his home when that of his beloved sister occurred, and a glimpse of second-sight seems to have dawned on her last hours. In a letter dated March 12th, 1815, to Mrs. Hook, wife of the Dean of Winchester, and compiler of the 'Sacred Hours,' Mrs. Grant, referring to the recent deaths of a son and daughter, adds:—"I must tell you that Anne, for a few days before her death, when waking confused from unquiet sleep, exclaimed three or four times, 'Duncan is in Heaven!' Strange, this gave us no fear or alarm at the time; now it is balm to my sad recollections: he died about ten days before her."

In the spring of 1815, Mrs. Grant, finding that her house in Heriot Row had become too small for her pupils, removed to a larger one in Prince's Street. Conscious of the fragile tenure by which she held her dearest earthly blessings, anxiety constituted her principal trial during the next five years, which were brightened by many intervals of enjoyment.

In September 1820, she accidentally slipped down some stone steps, and received an injury which lamed her for life, but in no degree abated the elasticity of her spirits or the goodness of her general health.

In 1821 the Highland Society of London awarded her their gold medal for the best 'Essay on the Past and Present State of the Highlands of Scotland.' On the 1st of July in the same year, Mrs. Grant's sorrows were

renewed and increased by the death of her youngest daughter, Moore, in the twenty-fifth year of her age.

On the 16th of June, 1823, her daughter Isabella died.

In 1826 Mrs. Grant removed her residence to Bracehouse, a detached dwelling surrounded by a garden, which her crippled state rendered doubly delightful to her.

On the 16th of November, 1827, Mary, her eldest and last surviving daughter, died.

No sooner had she acquired independence than those for whose sake she had indefatigably laboured were placed beyond the reach of secular advantages. Of all her twelve children, only one remained, the youngest son, who, like the rest, was pious, sensible, and affectionate. Her pupils, who loved her so well that they seldom left her home until called upon to establish households of their own, gathered often around her desolate hearth, and habitually showed her the most dutiful attentions.

Her books, her school, legacies from deceased friends, and at last a literary pension, placed her late in life in easy circumstances, which enabled her to gratify her generous propensities by assisting indigent merit.

To please those who cared for her happiness, she continued to make occasional excursions into the country, and to visit at the houses of old friends. She maintained her habits of early rising, kept her mind open, as of yore, to every agreeable emotion from the aspects of nature and the intercourse of life, took a lively interest in all the stirring incidents of the times, cherished her political prejudices for the Tories by friendly discussions with the Whigs, largely contributed to the intellectual enjoyment of her social circle, and proved the steadfast truth of her own early assertion, that she never forgot any one she ever cared for.

In April 1832, on her son's marriage, she left Braehouse to reside with him.

Early in the year 1837, her daughter-in-law died, and she removed to Manor Place. She continued to associate and to correspond with her friends until a few weeks before her death, which occurred on the 7th of November, 1838, in the eighty-fourth year of her age. She was buried near the graves of four of her daughters in the New Cemetery of St. Cuthbert's in the city of Edinburgh.

In the year 1844 her 'Autobiography,' and a Series of 'Familiar Letters' from 1803 to 1838, were published, edited by her son John-Peter Grant, Writer to the Signet.

Having lived for eight-and-twenty years among the most eminent literary people of the time, and read all the fashionable books, Mrs. Grant has thrown into these letters anecdotes, sketches of character, and critical remarks, which add to the interest they possess as records of family biography. Between her fragmentary 'Autobiography' and the statements made in her 'Letters' posthumously published, compared with her 'Letters from the Mountains,' and her 'Memoirs of an American Lady,' many flagrant discrepancies occur. Guided by the rule of always adopting contemporaneous documents in preference to long unwritten reminiscences, while accepting also such subsequent documents as cast a broader light upon preceding ones, this biographical notice has been founded upon the best evidence afforded by her writings.

Her memory was wonderfully good, but she trusted it too implicitly upon other points as well as upon those of her family and personal history. The 'Letters from the Mountains,' and the 'Memoirs of an American Lady,' give totally different accounts of Aunt Schuyler's birth and

parentage. Several passages in the 'Memoirs' are likewise opposed to each other. At page 141 of the 'Memoirs' Mrs. Grant states that the old Colonel did not live to witness his eldest son's marriage with Catalina, which took place in the year 1719. At page 163 of the same volume, she states that this young pair chiefly resided with the old Colonel for two years before his death, which took place in 1721! These inconsistencies, so far as they relate to the Schuylers, may possibly have been rectified in after editions, but strange want of vigilance is manifested by the omission of at least a note to show the reader that the second statement was to be considered as a correction of the first.

There was a want of systematic accuracy in all her compositions. She had little constructive power, and great ability in word-painting from natural objects. Her style fails in precision, though it is seldom deficient in perspicuity. Her syntax is often faulty; her orthography was notoriously incorrect, and wholly at the mercy of the printers. She uses many peculiarities of diction, often substituting the preposition "of" for the preposition "for," and making the adverb "whenever" equivalent to "as soon as:" for instance, "I am the better *of* being tenderly cared for, and *of* three months in the country"—"*Whenever* she heard that I was here, she came." Like most Scotch writers, she sometimes misplaced the verbs "will" and "shall."

Every moral and social truth which she knew, and her memory was full of such, had been either directly brought to her by a fact, impressed by a fact, or conjoined with one by way of illustration; and all these facts were either incidents of her personal history, or occurrences in the lives of people upon whose traces she had trodden. This

realisation of things imparts to her writings an air of freshness and originality, which, atoning for all faults of construction and of style, renders their perusal always pleasing. It had the same effect in society, where the sagacity of her intellect, the affectionate warmth of her heart, her natural ease and fluency of speech, and the refined simplicity of her manners, always rendered her an object of interest, and often of admiration.

She personally exemplified the Highland attributes which she admired: "virtuous and dignified poverty, elegance of sentiment that lives in the heart and conduct, and subsists independent of local and transitory modes."*

The glazing of stoneware is said to differ from that of earthenware in being no superficial addition, but the result of the actual fusion of the substance. This affords an apt resemblance of such persons whose outward polish, like that of Mrs. Grant, forms an integral part of themselves.

Her mind expanded early to its full stretch. It never shrunk; it never relaxed in its tension, it never faded; but after youth had passed, it evinced no perceptible growth. Perhaps, imitative talent gave, in the first instance, the semblance of precocious ripeness, and in the course of years original ability superseded that semblance with reality; be that as it may, in worldly wisdom, in literature, and in piety, her early attainments were admirable, and they were in later life well sustained, if not augmented. Even religious progress showed itself chiefly in that confirmed habit of submission to the will of a Heavenly Father, which enabled her patiently to resign, one after another, her idolised children to Him. Nor should that merciful Providence pass unremarked, which,

* 'Letters from the Mountains,' ed. 1806, vol. i. p. 251.

in pity to her tender heart, left her to the last one child to be her daily comfort, and to close her eyes.

Her reading seems to have been extensive, but desultory. Perhaps hundreds of the women of her day read as much, and probably not a tithe of them remembered the subject matter so tenaciously as she did, or wrought it into the mind so thoroughly. For doing this she had singular advantages in her personal intercourse with the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviewers, and in her constant habit of retailing her own opinions and their judgments in frequent conversations with other associates, and in numerous letters to her friends; so that the same subject, being set before her mind in several different lights of investigation in receiving, and of explanation in imparting it, became perfectly familiar, and took its durable place in her retentive memory.

With admirable impartiality and candour, but with too much severity, Mrs. Grant asserts* that she had "no fountain of inspiration, but a cistern of acquisitions."

She was undoubtedly gifted with that faculty of originating ideas which constitutes genius; she versified harmoniously, and rhymed with facility. She must, therefore, be enrolled among the British poetesses, and her own frank avowal of her sensations and feelings will unintentionally assist in fixing the rank she ought to occupy.

In a letter to Miss Catherine-Maria Fanshawe, dated February 18, 1809, Mrs. Grant says: "When I first went to the Highlands, I thought it pretty and poetical to admire the general face of the country, and spurred myself up to something like admiration, but it was, without a pun, uphill work. Particular spots charmed me, but the general aspect of the country made me always think myself in a

* 'Letters from the Mountains,' vol. ii. p. 191, ed. 1.

defile guarded by savage and gloomy giants with their heads in the clouds and their feet washed by cataracts; in short, it appeared to me as awful as it would be to live night and day in that mighty Minster that so filled my eyes and my imagination when lately at York. Time, however, went on, and I began to grow a little savage myself: 'not a mountain reared its head unsung;' and, when I grew acquainted with the language and the poetry of the country, I found a thousand interesting localities combined with those scenes where the lovely and the brave of other days had still a local habitation and a name: cherished traditions, and the poetry of nature and the heart shed light over scenes the most gloomy, and peopled solitude with images the most attractive and awakening. When, after a long residence in this land of enthusiasm, I left the abode of ghosts, and warrior-hunters, and heroines, to come down to common life in a flat country, you cannot imagine how bleak and unsheltered, how tame and uninteresting, it appeared."

Again, writing to the same friend, on the 17th of September, 1810, Mrs. Grant says, in reference to a tour which she had lately made with some English visitors:—"I have seen the Trosachs before, and thought them all that Walter Scott describes; yet till now they produced less of the local interest which pervades all Highland scenery than any other district I know. And why? Because they were uncelebrated and unsung; and almost every mountain glen and every moor that I ever saw or heard of besides is connected with some strain of native poetry, some note of wild music, or some antique legend, that give a local habitation and a name to those forms which float on the memory, or fleet through the imagination. When I first went to the Highlands, and, from not

knowing the language or the people, could not taste the charms of their poetry, the sentiments of their music, or the delights of manners more courteous, and conversation more intelligent, than are anywhere else to be met with among rustics;* when first, I say, I wandered untaught and forlorn amid the desolation of brown heaths and dusky mountains, I was at times charmed with particular scenes, but the general effect was as much lost on me as on these tourists: I was like the ignorant maid who tried her master's violin all over, and could never find where the tune lay."

Here is confession, unwittingly made, that the true spirit of sublime poetry never inhabited the mind of Mrs. Grant. The recorded experience of genius is the very obverse of hers. The serene aspect of alpine heights contemplated for the first time, the voiceless monition of unknown mountain solitudes, the presence of nature in stupendous and gigantic majesty, evoke no sensation of repulsion or strangeness, but rather the welcome realisation of vaguely ideal forms of grandeur: affording objects of gratification to a congenial faculty, and educing a flow of enthusiastic affection, which tacitly owns the heart to have met at last with scenes which must blend with its noblest and dearest remembrances for ever. Historic, traditional, and poetical associations can light up their localities with brightness all their own. Heroes and heroines appear to advantage with a background of solemn or beautiful scenery, and the secondary charm of human interest is added by fictitious narrative to many an alpine spot. That charm, however, can invest any landscape, whether mountainous or marine, of the woodland or the plain: Cowper has diffused it over

* Mrs. Grant was unacquainted with the Welsh, whose music and manners deserve at least equal praise with those of the Highland peasantry.

the flat arable and pasture lands of Buckinghamshire; the Brontés have cast its lustre with fascinating brilliancy across the bleak and unpicturesque moors of Haworth.

Genuine appreciation of natural scenery has its proper gradations of admiration and love for every landscape; but it is in all its varied characters essentially different and distinct from mere adventitious associations. Mrs. Grant became reconciled to mountain heights, glens, and cataracts, for the sake of those who had trodden and sung there; or under the spell of romantic fiction. She learned to like the severe and stately glory of desert ranges; but it was after the same manner that some persons take pleasure in sea-views, on account of the graceful ships and pretty boats which diversify the monotonous vastness of the ocean.

ON A SPRIG OF HEATH.

"Flower of the waste! the heath-fowl shuns
For thee the brake and tangled wood;
To thy protecting shade she runs,
Thy tender buds supply her food;
Her young forsake her downy plumes
To rest upon thy opening blooms.

Flower of the desert though thou art,
The deer that range the mountain free,
The graceful doe, the stately hart,
Their food and shelter seek from thee;
The bee thy earliest blossom greets,
And drains from thee her choicest sweets.

Gem of the heath! whose modest bloom
Sheds beauty o'er the lonely moor;
Though thou dispense no rich perfume,
Nor yet with splendid tints allure,
Both valour's crest and beauty's bower
Oft hast thou decked, a favourite flower.

Flower of the wild! whose purple glow
Adorns the dusky mountain's side;
Not the gay hues of Iris' bow,
Nor garden's artful varied pride,
With all its wealth of sweets, could cheer
Like thee, the hardy mountaineer.

Flower of his heart! thy fragrance mild
  Of peace and freedom seems to breathe;
To pluck thy blossom in the wild,
  And deck his bonnet with the wreath,
Where dwelt of old his rustic sires,
Is all his simple wish desires.

Flower of his dear-loved native land,
  Alas! when distant far more dear!
When he, from some cold foreign strand,
  Looks homeward through the blinding tear,
How must his aching heart deplore,
The home and thee he sees no more!"

CHAPTER XX.

THE POETESSES.

A.D. 1838-1850.

Lady Flora-Elizabeth Hastings — Mary-Anne Browne.

"Oh! who shall lightly say that fame
Is nothing but an empty name?
When records of the mighty dead
To earth-worn pilgrim's wistful eye
The brightest rays of cheering shed
That point to immortality!" *

LADY FLORA-ELIZABETH HASTINGS.

LADY Flora-Elizabeth Hastings was born on the 11th of February, 1806. Her parents were Francis, second Earl of Moira, created Marquis of Hastings December 7th, 1816, and Flora-Mure Campbell, Countess of Loudon in her own right. Lady Flora was from childhood thoughtful, studious, and conscientious, and in maturer age piety and poetry were her chief sources of happiness.

She became a lady of the bedchamber to H. R. H. the Duchess of Kent, who appreciated her high-toned and amiable character. Being afflicted with a chronic enlargement of the liver, rumours were circulated injurious to her reputation, which, although disbelieved and reprobated by the Royal Duchess, who judged of pure and noble hearts by her own, tended by their effect on Lady Flora's sen-

* 'Metrical Legends,' by Joanna Baillie.

sitive feelings to aggravate her malady and hasten her death. She expired at Buckingham Palace on the 5th of July, 1839.

Her poems, chiefly evoked by the incidents of her previous history, were posthumously published. They want the light and fire of original genius, and are feeble imitations of various pieces by Mrs. Hemans. Among these plaintive strains, the following are highly polished and pleasing:—

ITALY.

"Oh, name it not! there is a spell
Around its memory clinging,
To which I would not bid farewell
For all the future's bringing.

The skies of radiant Italy,
Oh, they are deeply blue!
And nothing save their kindred waves
Can match their sapphire hue.
No little clouds e'er flit across
To dim their heavenly light;
Would that my soul were pure as they,
As spotless and as bright!

The gales of balmy Italy,
Oh! as they fleet along,
They bear upon their downy wings
The treasured wealth of song;
They linger through the blooming scenes
Where once my footsteps roved,
And they are free, though I am not,
To kiss the flowers I loved.

The songs of tuneful Italy,
They wake within my heart
Those visions of the olden time
Which will not thence depart;
And freedom, love, and honour bright,
Rise from the dust again.
Would that my feeble lyre could wake
The spirit-stirring strain!

The flowers of sunny Italy,
Oh, blissful is their doom!
A brief, bright space to bloom—then sink
Untrodden to the tomb,

Still breathing fragrance as they droop
Beneath the golden ray.
Oh! thus wer't mine to sigh my soul
In ecstasy away!

The tombs of holy Italy,—
The earth where heroes trod,
Where sainted martyrs glorified
In death the Incarnate God!
Where all is bright, and pure, and calm,
On earth, in air, and sea;
Oh, Italy, amongst thy tombs,
Hast thou not one for me?"

THE SWAN SONG.

"Grieve not that I die young. Is it not well
To pass away ere life hath lost its brightness?
Bind me no longer, sisters, with the spell
Of love and your kind words. List ye to me:
Here I am bless'd, but I would be more free,
I would go forth in all my spirit's lightness.
Let me depart.

Ah! who would linger till bright eyes grow dim,
Kind voices mute, and faithful bosoms cold?
Till carking care, and coil, and anguish grim,
Cast their dark shadows o'er this fairy world?
Till fancy's many-coloured wings are furled,
And all, save the proud spirit, waxeth old?
I would depart.

Thus would I pass away—yielding my soul
A joyous thank-offering to Him who gave
That soul to be, those starry orbs to roll;
Thus, thus, exultingly would I depart,
Song on my lips, ecstacy in my heart;
Sisters, sweet sisters, bear me to my grave!
Let me depart!"

MARY-ANNE BROWNE.

Maidenhead in Berkshire was the birthplace of Mary-Anne Browne, and she first saw the light in 1812.

Her precocious talents caused injudicious and ambitious friends to force her into premature notice, and a collection of her verses came before the public when she was only

fifteen years of age. Happily, the indigenous plant had sufficient strength to endure this stove-culture without utter exhaustion, and to recover itself afterwards in fresh air and a congenial soil.

In the year 1840 her family removed to Liverpool. In 1842 she married James Gray, a Scotchman, and a nephew of James Hogg the Ettrick Shepherd. She died at Cork in 1844.

Her mature character was remarkable for piety and charity, shown in deeds of unostentatious usefulness to all around her.

She wrote 'Mont Blanc,' 'Ada,' 'Repentance,' 'The Coronal,' 'The Birthday Gift,' 'Ignatia,' 'Sacred Poetry,' and many fugitive pieces in periodicals. They evince a mind which has derived its nutriment chiefly from secondary sources. Her style is always imitative, yet the pathos which usually belongs to her themes, and her mode of treating them, is attractive and endearing.

Woman's Love.

"When Man is waxing frail,
And his hand is thin and weak,
And his lips are parched and pale,
And wan and white his cheek,
Oh! then doth woman prove
Her constancy and love!

She sitteth by his chair,
And holds his feeble hand;
She watcheth ever there,
His wants to understand;
His yet unspoken will
She hasteneth to fulfil.

She leads him, when the noon
Is bright o'er dale and hill,
And all things, save the tune
Of the honey-bees, are still,
Into the garden bowers,
To sit 'midst herbs and flowers.

And when he goes not there,
To feast on breath and bloom,
She brings the posy rare
Into his darkened room;
And 'neath his weary head
The pillow smooth doth spread.

Until the hour when death
His lamp of life doth dim,
She never wearieth,
She never leaveth him;
Still near him night and day
She meets his eye alway.

And when his trial's o'er,
And the turf is on his breast,
Deep in her bosom's core
Lie sorrows unexpressed.
Her tears, her sighs are weak,
Her settled grief to speak.

And though there may arise
Balm for her spirit's pain,
And though her quiet eyes
May sometimes smile again;
Still, still, she must regret,
She never can forget!"

THE GIFTED.

"Oh! woe for those whose dearest themes
Must rest within the bosom's fold!
Oh! woe for those who live on dreams,
Unheeded by the coarse and cold:
They have a hidden life, akin
To nothing in this earthly sphere;
They have a glorious world within,
Where nothing mortal may appear;
A world of song, and flower, and gem,
Yet woe for them! oh, woe for them!

Such his perplexing grief who seeks
A refuge upon stranger shores;
In vain to foreign ears he speaks,
In vain their sympathy implores.
The same sad fate a bark might prove,
Laden with gold or princely store,
Without a guiding star above,
With an unmeasured deep before.
The world doth scorn them, gibe, condemn,—
Woe for the gifted, woe for them!"

Unlike the wretched prognosticator who wore himself out with denouncing "Woe to Jerusalem!" and concluded by a death-cry of "Woe to myself!" poor Mary-Anne Browne escaped scatheless, in safe mediocrity and a quiet home; from her sentimental declaration. It is a sort of paraphrase of some lines by Mrs. Hemans.

No British poetess having died between the years 1844 and 1850, the name of Mary-Anne Browne concludes the series which the writer of these pages has undertaken to illustrate. A few words of retrospection will therefore close her self-allotted and pleasing task.

M. le Baron de Barante, in his admirable essay 'De la Littérature Française pendant le Dix-huitième Siècle,' calls attention to the fact that Poetry played during that period quite a different part to what it did among the ancients; that it formed an essential portion of their manners, and almost of their language; that it expressed habitual sentiments, and employed itself with every-day occurrences, representing facts according to the popular belief, and places that lay before the people's eyes; that it adored the gods who were celebrated in public worship; and, in a word, that it was full of reality, and not a mere conventional language.

In terms as appropriate to the English writers of his time as to the French whom he addresses, M. de Barante adds, that with us neither Poetry, nor indeed general literature, is of native growth. If that literature had not received foreign and ancient importations, if it had remained the daughter of our old fables, of our romances of chivalry, of our old mysteries, and of our Gothic superstitions, he tells us, it might perhaps have vegetated through a prolonged infancy, but it would have preserved a true and national

character, an intimate connection with our manners, our religion, and our annals, which must have secured for it a direct and more complete effect. Such, however, has not been the case. Our writers, at the revival of letters, instead of perfecting their native literature, deemed themselves the heirs of Greece and Rome, adopted in literature strange gods and foreign manners, repudiating all national remembrances to transport themselves into those of antiquity. People began to copy and dress up antique models, repelling the impressions and inspirations of habitual life. Verse, which in days of yore constituted the charm of palaces and feudal castles, which our unlettered kings and cavaliers artlessly traced with the sword's point to express their loves and woes, became the exclusive patrimony of the learned, who were well acquainted with Horace and Pindar, but forgot nature. This pedantic and artificial imitation of the ancients gradually assumed a mixed character. Real circumstances modified borrowed passages, and there resulted from this twofold activity a middle path in which authors have trodden ever since; but although long habit and education have almost identified us with this system, its poetry has ever retained a certain harsh alienation from our ordinary usages, and only by a sort of tacit convention are we enabled to transport ourselves into its domains.

It is this, the same eloquent writer has remarked, which leaves us so far behind the ancients, and more than all behind the Greeks, who live always in the midst of reality, who paint what they feel, describe what they see, and never find themselves compelled to exaggerate their sense of things, or to inflate their language.*

* See the passage which begins :—"Sans parler des obstacles que peut présenter la langue, sous le rapport de la syntaxe et de l'harmonie, il faut observer," &c.

Thus far M. de Barante has been followed. As regards English poetry, it passed under the additional influences of the Italian, and of the French modification of the ancient classic style, while still the natural and national kind lingered on obscure, and scarcely recognised excepting in the ballads of the uneducated.

On a survey of the whole subject, it is apparent that in literature, as in the fine manual arts, excellence can never be ensured by such imitation as slavishly copies line for line, and tint for tint, and affects to assume the general tone or minor peculiarities of others. On the contrary, it should be sought in following, attentively yet freely, nature's true principle of development, the acquisition of means, divers and severally appropriate, in the use of which original genius, according to its kind and degree, may independently work out its conceptions after the example of those poets who, writing not for their generation only but for human nature in all times, produced masterpieces translatable into all languages, and welcome to all hearts. The truth of nature, of present circumstances, of daily life, of Divine worship, and of real feeling, experimental and personal, not imitated truth, is essential to every form of real poetry, and can never fail to give vitality to words, to enkindle sympathy, and touch the motive springs of conduct.

Among the English Poetesses noticed in preceding chapters, down to the year 1815, Lady Pembroke stands alone in Arcadian elegy, Lady Winchelsea excels in rural description, Miss Seward remains unsurpassed in the poetical novel, and Mrs. Tighe in epic allegory; Charlotte Smith claims the palm for her sonnets, Mrs. Barbauld for her hymns, and Hannah More wears, without a visible rival, the double wreath of didactic and dramatic verse.

These pre-eminent women, as well as their less distin-

guished sisters of the lyre, intermingled natural feeling in a greater or less degree with the artificial systems of their times, according to the precedents afforded by the particular authors whose writings they severally chose as models for imitation or standards of taste. Cowper and Bowles, Crabbe and Joanna Baillie, Coleridge and Wordsworth, having broken away from the thraldom of system, and publicly proclaimed the liberty of poetic utterance, heralded a new era in English literature.

The different lengths of the lives of the Poetesses, and the extreme longevity of a few, tend, in a chronological survey, to produce a somewhat bewildering, although a just effect, answering to real life, where whole generations do not die off regularly in the order of birth, but certain individuals live on, and become successively cotemporary with the second, third, and even with the fourth ranks of population's advancing hosts.

Joanna Baillie, born in the year 1762, published the first volume of her 'Plays on the Passions' in 1798, transcending at once, by many degrees of splendour, the dramatic fame of Hannah More: although no tragedy ever written by Joanna Baillie, with all its structural skill, intellectual wealth, penetrating insight, original power, and beautiful poetry, attained as high a measure of theatrical success as Hannah More's 'Percy' had done. Joanna Baillie continued to publish poetry until the year 1836, and did not die until February 23, 1851.

In 1823, Hannah More, for the second time in the course of her long life, saw herself surpassed in dramatic composition, Mary Russell Mitford, born in 1786, having had 'Julian,' the first of her three eminently successful tragedies, performed in London, and subsequently published. This, however, was chiefly a stage triumph: the

skilful construction of the plot, the life-like reality of the personages, the suitable apportionment of sentiments to characters, the natural and genial beauty of occasional passages, and the passionate force of the whole, served alike in 'Julian,' in 'The Two Foscari,' and in 'Rienzi,' to win applause and to secure popularity, notwithstanding large quantities of unconscious plagiarisms, and verses so defective in metre and so dissonant in rhythm, that the word *poetry* could only be applied to them in courtesy. Mary Russell Mitford died January 10, 1855.

'The Vespers of Palermo,' and the other tragedies of Mrs. Hemans, are worthy as mere poems, though not as dramas, to be compared with the ablest of Joanna Baillie's.

The local influences brought to bear upon the childhood of these two poetesses were similar and peculiar. One was born nine-and-twenty years before the other, and died sixteen years after her. One was brought up in Scotland, and one in Wales: both were of ancient lineage. They never met; and until the bloom of youth had faded from the youngest, and the characters of both had set, they never entered into correspondence. Their natural dispositions and talents differed essentially: one was a geometrician, a logician, self-sustained and independent both in judgment and action: the other, though lively and spirited, might be taken as a type of feminine dependence.

Both were richly endowed with genius, and the poetry of both was of that highly imaginative, yet experimental, kind for which mountain lands, Celtic traditions, secluded and frugal, though enlightened, rural homes had trained them. To institute a comparison between their lives, characters, and intellectual productions does not fall within the boundaries of the present work. Two poetesses superior to them Great Britain has never yet produced. If a third,

within the century, be admitted as nearly entitled to a seat beside them, it is Mrs. Tighe, who, in a higher sphere of social life, possessed also the advantage of passing her childhood amid the scenery and peasantry of a Celtic land.

Without degrading Lady Pembroke's 'Astrophel' from the lofty and solitary niche it is entitled to occupy, candour compels the confession that, as Spenserian verse, that poem is rivalled by Mrs. Tighe's 'Psyche;' and that, as a monody, it is surpassed, in the expression of genuine sorrow, and the power of evoking sympathy, by many elegiac verses which women have subsequently written: those, for instance, of Lady Hertford on the death of Mrs. Rowe, and of Mrs. Hemans on the death of Bishop Heber.

Lady Winchelsea's didactic pieces are rivalled by those of Hannah More in piquant brilliancy, knowledge of the world, and real wisdom: her descriptions of rural nature in the 'Night Scene' are equalled by Mrs. Hemans in her 'Spirit's Return,' where the intense stillness of nature is so effectively portrayed as to beguile the reader's mind into a state of preparation for the supernatural apparition.

As a novelistic love-story, Miss Seward's 'Louisa' has not been surpassed by any poetess included in this volume, nor by any one who has subsequently died.*

The sonnets of Charlotte Smith are far inferior in mental and moral beauty to those of Mrs. Hemans. A parallel might be drawn between the lives and characters of these two eminent women, but the points of divergence are far more striking. Charlotte Smith possessed that breadth of understanding, that facility in applying her attention to the exact sciences, and that practical faculty for business,

* When the above line was penned, the world had not lost Mrs. Barrett-Browning.

which were deficient in Mrs. Hemans; whose benignity and sweetness increased under trials which turned the other's to gall and verjuice.

The last-written hymns of Mrs. Hemans are not inferior to the hymns of Mrs. Barbauld, though different in kind: nor are they less suited to the purposes of public worship, in their earnest and quiet intensity of petition and thanksgiving, than those calm and devout recitals which occasionally solemnize the feelings of almost all the Christian congregations in England, and owe their origin to the consecrated talents of Mrs. Barbauld.

Mrs. Hemans cherished for the memory of Mrs. Tighe the attachment of conscious resemblance. Both were blessed with mothers who trained them for excellence: both possessed acute sensibilities, passionately deep, true, and tender affections—"hearts of tendrils:" both had highly-cultivated minds, conversant with the literature of many lands: both greatly delighted in the beauties of external nature, in music, painting, and sculpture: both were adepts in harmonious versification: both richly endowed with a high order of genius: and both regulated the exercise of their fine poetic faculties with taste of the purest kind. Mrs. Tighe died before life's summer had passed; Mrs. Hemans died when its autumn had just begun.

With all these points of similarity, there existed, nevertheless, great diversity between them, in the outward circumstances of their respective lives, as well as in their literary characters. Mrs. Tighe languished out her stricken life in luxurious immunity from worldly cares, an object of almost idolatrous affection to all those whom she loved the best, and soothed to the last by the fond attentions of a mother and a husband. Mrs. Hemans had to struggle seventeen years for the welfare of her five sons, while the

husband who should have aided her was far away, in alienation; and at last her guiding and protecting mother died, and left her desolate.

All the poetry of Mrs. Tighe was either allegorical and elaborately ornamented, or the direct utterance of personal feeling. The collected works of Mrs. Hemans do not furnish throughout the seven volumes a single instance of original allegory. She entertained a settled dislike to that kind of composition, and few poets who have written so much as she has done ever used so seldom similes, metaphors, or any formal figures of speech. Her decorations always formed an integral part of her fabric; and her poems, even when they breathed her own regrets and aspirations, never assumed a tone of individual complaint, and invariably expressed or indicated something beyond the self-indulgence of a melancholy mood, stimulating either domestic, social, or religious feeling. As regards the comparative ability of these two gifted women, the 'Psyche' alone can be put in competition.

None of the minor poems of Mrs. Tighe will bear comparison with those of Mrs. Hemans, because their tone of anguish is not sufficiently mitigated by lenient accessories to reduce them to the proper condition of works of art, and render them capable of imparting unmixed pleasure.

Inferior to the 'Psyche' in gorgeousness, splendour, and inventive ingenuity, equal to that poem in force of intellect, elegance of language, and melody of verse, 'The Forest Sanctuary' far excels it in elevation of sentiment, human interest, and real pathos, and consequently possesses wider and stronger claims on the world's remembrance.

The mournful announcement that—

> "—— Bought alone by gifts beyond all price,
> The trusting heart's repose, the paradise

Of home with all its loves, doth fate allow
The crown of glory unto woman's brow"*—

has happily been disproved by many notable examples of filial, conjugal, and maternal happiness. Each severally blessed with the threefold treasure of such home affections were Margaret Roper, Lady Burleigh, Lady Bacon, Lucy Hutchinson, Lady Fanshawe, Catherine Cockburn, and Anne Grant.

It may safely be asserted that the exercise of extraordinary ability never involves the sacrifice of peace of mind and of domestic comfort, unless, stimulated by worldly ambition, and breaking the boundaries of judgment, the propensity assumes the unnatural aspect of an ill-regulated and monopolising passion.

The owners of great talents have, almost invariably, strong wills; just as a bird's strength of pinion is proportioned to its proper flight. If that strong will be guided by right principles, the balance of the character will be preserved, and life, instead of being made miserable by superior sensibilities and intellectual endowments, must and will be cheered and blessed by them.

Among the readers of the foregoing pages may possibly be some female aspirants to "frame excelling things," and to win "sublime rewards." To them it is hoped that these brief biographies of literary Englishwomen may prove better incentives than the trophies of Miltiades did to Themistocles; urging them, not merely to emulate their precursors' fame, but to avoid their errors, and to follow their example in the best and noblest things.

One lesson such aspirants ought more especially to reiterate and imprint upon themselves—that no talent with which a favoured individual may be gifted; no capacity

* 'Joan of Arc in Rheims,' by Mrs. Hemans.

for knowledge; no aptitude for artistic accomplishments; no taste, however discriminating; no genius, however fine and powerful; can constitute an admissible plea for the neglect of even the smallest act of domestic duty: that the claims of a parent or a brother, of a husband, a child, or a household, not merely in the extraordinary exigencies of sickness or sorrow, but in the everyday occurrences of life, must take habitual and unhesitating precedence of all intellectual pursuits.

Whatever the natural inclinations may be, in a well-regulated character the desire for self-improvement will steadily maintain its ascendency, by the regulation of the moral feelings and the sedulous culture of the intellectual powers. A resolute will, guided by enlightened reason and conscience, cannot fail correctly to prescribe the use of every talent. That very gift of mental brilliancy or power which the ignorant or self-indulgent would plead as a cause of exemption from the trivialities of practical economy or household employments, furnishes, indeed, a strong argument for diligently applying to them; because the gem of intrinsic worth will have many facets advantageously cut by that best of all lapidaries actual experience; and the power which is ultimately to propel new thoughts, to construct new combinations, and to judge aright of widely collected instances, will gain weight and acceleration in being put to various uses, while the whole character expands, invigorated and ennobled by self-denial and self-conquest, attains a completeness it would otherwise have wanted, and usefulness beyond the most sanguine dreams of youth.

It is neither the wish nor intention of the writer to assume a didactic air; but it may, perhaps, be as well, in an age when listless lassitude and galvanic restlessness divide

the days of too many young Englishwomen, to point out the effect of a well-chosen pursuit, followed up in leisure hours, in promoting a strong and healthful interest in daily life, and a diligent application to its duties. The love of ease and idleness among the labouring classes is justly reckoned one of the most prolific sources of crime; and indolence among the wealthy, besides involving in itself both waste of life and waste of talents, is likewise a most seductive incentive to various forms of sin. Every one possesses some ability—literary, artistic, mechanical, housewifely, or horticultural—which, used as a favourite recreation, may keep the thoughts pleasantly employed, quicken the languid stream of time, like a breeze setting in to accompany its course, and help it to speed cheerfully along independent of frivolous and mischievous contrivances.

The Lives, Works, and Deaths briefly recorded in these pages will speak for themselves to earnest minds, and teach yet higher lessons.

In order to leave with the reader a favourable impression of the Literary Women of England, the following poem has been reserved for this place.

DESPONDENCY AND ASPIRATION.*

By MRS. HEMANS.

"My soul was mantled with dark shadows, born
Of lonely fear, disquieted in vain;
Its phantoms hung around the star of morn,
A cloud-like weeping train:
Through the long day they dimmed the autumn gold
On all the glistening leaves, and wildly rolled,
When the last farewell flush of light was glowing
Across the sunset sky;
O'er its rich isles of vaporous glory throwing
One melancholy dye.

* 'Works,' vol. vii. p. 276.

And when the solemn night
Came rushing with her might
Of stormy oracles from caves unknown,
Then, with each fitful blast
Prophetic murmurs passed,
Wakening or answering some deep sibyl-tone
Far buried in my breast, yet prompt to rise
With every gusty wail that o'er the wind-harp flies.

Fold, fold thy wings, they cried, and strive no more;
Faint spirit, strive no more! for thee too strong
Are outward ill and wrong,
And inward wasting fires. Thou canst not soar
Free on a starry way
Beyond their blighting sway,
At Heaven's high gate serenely to adore!
How shouldst *thou* hope earth's fetters to unbind,
Oh, passionate yet weak! oh, trembler to the wind!

Never shall aught but broken music flow
From joy of thine, deep love, or tearful woe;
Such homeless notes as through the forest sigh,
From the reed's hollow shaken
When sudden breezes waken
Their vague wild symphony.
No power is theirs and no abiding place
In human hearts; their sweetness leaves no trace;
Born only so to die!

Never shall aught but perfume faint and vain,
On the fleet pinion of the changeful hour,
From thy bruised life again
A moment's essence breathe;
Thy life, whose trampled flower
Into the blessed wreath
Of household charities no longer bound,
Lies pale and withering on the barren ground.

So fade, fade on! Thy gift of love shall cling
A coiling sadness round thy heart and brain—
A silent, fruitless, yet undying thing,
All sensitive to pain!
And still the shadow of vain dreams shall fall
O'er thy mind's world, a daily darkening pall.
Fold, then, thy wounded wing, and sink subdued
In cold and unrepining quietude!

Then my soul yielded: spells of numbing breath
Crept o'er it, heavy with a dew of death:
Its powers, like leaves, before the night-rain closing;
And as by conflict of wild sea-waves tossed
On the chill bosom of some desert coast,
Mutely and hopelessly, I lay reposing.

When silently it seemed
As if a soft mist gleamed
Before my passive sight, and, slowly curling,
To many a shape and hue
Of visioned beauty grew,
Like a wrought banner, fold by fold unfurling.
Oh! the rich scenes that o'er mine inward eye
Unrolling then swept by
With dreamy motion! Silvery seas were there,
Lit by large dazzling stars, and arched by skies
Of southern midnight's most transparent dyes;
And gemmed with many an island wildly fair,
Which floated past me into orient day,
Still gathering lustre on the illumined way,
Till its high groves of wondrous flowering trees
Coloured the silvery seas.

And then a glorious mountain-chain uprose,
Height above spiry height:
A soaring solitude of woods and snows,
All steeped in golden light.
While as it passed, those regal peaks unveiling,
I heard, methought, a waving of dread wings
And mighty sounds, as if the vision hailing
From lyres that quivered through ten thousand strings;
Or as if waters, forth to music leaping,
From many a cave, the alpine echo's hall,
On their bold way victoriously were sweeping,
Linked in majestic anthems: while through all
That billowy swell and fall,
Voices, like ringing crystal, filled the air
With inarticulate melody that stirred
My being's core; then moulding into word
Their piercing sweetness, bade me rise and bear
In that great choral strain my trembling part,
Of tones by love and faith struck from a human heart.

Return no more, vain bodings of the night!
A happier oracle within my soul
Hath swelled to power; a clear, unwavering light
Mounts through the battling clouds that round me roll:
And to a new control
Nature's full harp gives forth rejoicing tones,
Wherein my glad sense owns
The accordant rush of elemental sound
To one consummate harmony profound,
One grand Creation-Hymn,
Whose notes the Seraphim
Lift to the glorious height of music winged and crowned.

Shall not these notes find echos in my lyre,
Faithful though faint? Shall not my spirit's fire,
If slowly, yet unswervingly ascend
Now to its fount and end?
Shall not my earthly love, all purified,
Shine forth a heavenward guide,
An angel of bright power, and strongly bear
My being upward into holier air,
Where fiery passion-clouds have no abode,
And the sky's temple-arch o'erflows with God?

The radiant hope new born
Expands like rising morn
In my life's life; and as a ripening rose
The crimson shadow of its glory throws
More vivid, hour by hour, on some pure stream,
So from that hope are spreading
Rich hues, o'er nature shedding
Each day a clearer, spiritual gleam.

Let not those rays fade from me, once enjoyed,
Father of spirits! let them not depart,
Leaving the chilled earth, without form and void,
Darkened by mine own heart!
Lift, aid, sustain me! Thou, by whom alone
All lovely gifts and pure
In the soul's grasp endure;
Thou, to the steps of whose eternal throne
All knowledge flows, a sea for evermore
Breaking its crested waves on that sole shore,
Oh, consecrate my life! that I may sing
Of Thee with joy that hath a living spring
In a full heart of music! Let my lays
Through the resounding mountains waft Thy praise,
And with that theme the wood's green cloisters fill
And make their quivering, leafy dimness thrill
To the rich breeze of song! Oh, let me wake
The deep religion which hath dwelt from yore
Silently brooding by lone cliff and lake,
And wildest river shore!
And let me summon all the voices dwelling
Where eagles build, and caverned rills are welling,
And where the cataract's organ-peal is swelling,
In that one spirit gathered to adore!

Forgive, oh, Father! if presumptuous thought
Too daringly in aspiration rise!
Let not Thy child all vainly have been taught
By weakness, and by wanderings, and by sighs

Of sad confession! Lowly be my heart,
And on its penitential altar spread
The offerings, worthless till Thy grace impart
The fire from Heaven, whose touch alone can shed
Life, radiance, virtue! let that vital spark
Pierce my whole being, wildered else and dark!

Thine are all holy things,—oh, make *me* Thine!
So shall I, too, be pure, a living shrine
Unto that Spirit which goes forth from Thee
Strong and divinely free,
Bearing Thy gifts of wisdom on its flight,
And brooding o'er them with a dove-like wing,
Till thought, word, song, to Thee in worship spring,
Immortally endowed for liberty and light."

THE END.

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